THOUGHTS
ON
Nature and Religion.
OR, AN
APOLOGY
FOR THE RIGHT OF
Private Judgment,
MAINTAINED.

By MICHAEL SERVETUS, M. D.

IN HIS ANSWER TO
JOHN CALVIN.

This I confeſs, that after the way which they call Hereſy, ſo worſhip I the God of my Fathers; believing all things which are written in the Law, and the Prophets: And have hope towards God, that there ſhall be a Reſurrection of the Dead, both of the Juſt and Unjuſt. And herein do I exerciſe myſelf, to have always a Conſcience void of offence, towards God and towards Man.

ACTS, Chap. xxiv. v. 14, 15, 16.

Eſt modus in rebus, ſunt certi denique fines,
Quos ultra, citraque, nequit conſiſtere rectum.

HOR. Satir. lib. 1.

Virtute Tutus.

Printed by PHINEAS BAGNELL and COMPANY.
1774.

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THE
INTRODUCTION.

WERE one to conſider the various ſects and opinions, which have ſprung up at different times in the world, and have divided mankind into parties; and reflect with what bigotted zeal, each adheres to the ſyſtem it has embraced, ſo as to look on others, as men to be either deſpiſed for their ignorance, or perſecuted as enemies to truth; it muſt raiſe in his mind, a very diſagreeable idea of human underſtanding. For as each party look on their own belief as the ſtandard of truth, ſo do they look on all who differ from them to be wrong. To aſſign a cauſe for this ſelfiſh uncharitable way of condemning others, one is almoſt tempted to imagine, that conception, in different people, is not conveyed to the mind thro' the ſame channel, but that the ideas of truth and falſhood, right and wrong, moral and immoral, do not preſent themſelves in the ſame light to all men; or that there muſt be ſome jarring in the firſt principles of the human underſtanding: for if theſe firſt principles were the ſame in all men, it is difficult to comprehend how ſuch different concluſions could be drawn from them. I can only account for this, by ſuppoſing the mind to be as liable to be led aſtray, and as capable to be enſlaved, as the body is. When the body is enſlaved, an appeal to the mind makes it ſenſible of its fetters; and altho' it knows its condition, it is ſtill obliged to obey: but when the

mind is enſlaved, it has no higher power to appeal to. Ignorant of its privileges, it is ſatisfied with its ſubjection, and thinks it its duty to acquieſce. Certainly all men enjoy by nature an equal liberty of thinking and determining for themſelves; and if left alone until their judgments were ripe enough, they would moſtly agree in ſentiment. But before they attain to that age, education hath generally ſo byas'd their judgment, in favour of thoſe opinions in which they have been brought up, that it becomes a ſlave to it's prejudice. Men implicitly rely on the truth of thoſe tenets, which they have already embraced; they become convinced without enquiry, and being accuſtomed only to hear what may be ſaid in ſupport of the opinion of their own ſect, they will not allow themſelves patience to examine what may be ſaid againſt it; and if any arguments ſhould be propoſed, which they cannot properly anſwer, prejudice will ſtill hinder them from acknowledging their error, and for want of argument, they become angry, and have recourſe to ſcolding and defamation, in place of reaſoning; and as they cannot confute their opponents from reaſon, they endeavour to ſilence them, by throwing reflections on their private characters, and then telling the world, that ſuch men as they have painted, muſt be wrong in whatever they alledge as truth. I have obſerved this to be the conſtant practice of thoſe who perſiſt in defence of tenets, which reaſon cannot ſupport.

It is not only the privilege, but the duty of a Man, (who would judge impartially) to throw all prejudice aſide. He ſhould firſt examine with care, and then determine with calmneſs, according to the dictates of his reaſon; and althq' cuſtom, paſſion or prejudice are apt to byas his judgment, in favour of what he would chuſe ſhould be right, yet he may be aſſured, that whatever is impoſed on his underſtanding, which his con-

conſcience and reaſon cannot firmly ſupport, is an act of injuſtice to his judgment. But if he impartially eſtabliſhes his belief on the beſt foundation his reaſon can inform him of, altho' he may miſtake in his concluſions, he is to be excuſed; he was open to conviction, and hath framed his belief agreeably to thoſe principles, which were given by the Almighty to direct him; he hath done his duty: For as St. Paul tells us, *Every Man ſhould be convinced in his own mind. Why doſt thou judge thy Brother?* and (St. James) *there is one law giver who is able to ſave and to deſtroy. Who art thou that judgeſt another Man?*

Learning is the improvement of knowledge by comparing ideas, and from thence deducing concluſions which enlarge the underſtanding. Where there is no liberty allowed for the mind to examine, there can be no improvement in knowledge. Under a tyrannical government, he dares neither tell his doubts, nor even think with freedom, who is to ſuffer for entertaining thoughts contrary to his maſter's orders; who, inſtead of taking the trouble to inform and convince his underſtanding, would take the ſhorter method to convert him; he would puniſh him for diſobedience. In whatever country a Man is allowed full liberty in his ſearch after truth, there knowledge will improve, by a free enquiry, into learning: But where this liberty is denied, the mind will ſink into ignorance and ſuperſtition; for as learning is the child of liberty, ſo is ſuperſtition that of ſlavery; and the leſs the mind is informed, the more tenacious it is of its opinions. It is the happineſs of our government, that liberty is granted to every Man to improve his knowledge by a free examination; he may communicate every thought, or propoſe any doubt in publick, which does not interfere with the moral law, or good of ſociety: And notwithſtanding the opprobrious name of libertine or freethinker, beſtow-

ed, indiſcriminately by the Clergy, on all thoſe who preſume to take reaſon for their guide; I ſhall examine what I am to believe, comformable to the laws of nature, and that liberty recommended by the Chriſtian Religion, under the indulgence which the law of the land affords me.

8 NO 65

CHAP.

CHAPTER I.

A SENSE of what is good and evil diſtinguiſhes the human from the brute creation. It is that rule imprinted on the human mind, by which we are directed to conform to certain laws, of which brutes have no conception. To ſpeak truth, to do juſtice, to love mercy and ſhew benevolence to our fellow creatures, is what every man knows to be his duty and that to act contrary to theſe, muſt be criminal. This is an univerſal law; and, if we examine into the cauſes of the difference of opinions which prevail in the world, we ſhall find, that they do not ariſe from a denial of the law, but from a miſtake in the proper ſenſe of it; as that, which may appear agreeable to juſtice and mercy to the mind of one man, may, through prejudice or miſinformation, appear in a different light to another. It often happens that our paſſions hurry us on to tranſgreſs the law, notwithſtanding we acknowledge the juſtice of it. When Cain killed Abel, he knew he had done wrong, and endeavoured to evade a confeſſion: his brother's ſacrifice was more acceptable than his; he was provoked at this: he envied him, and envy made him kill him. Ignorance of his duty he did not alledge; for God ſaid to him, *If thou doſt well, ſhalt thou not be accepted? but if thou doſt not well, ſin lyeth at thy door.* He is here ſuppoſed perfectly ac-

quainted with the duty required and expected of him; but becauſe he did not act up to it, his ſacrifice was not accepted, and ſin lay at his door.

All animals (except in the caſe of parents) enjoy by nature the ſame independent liberty. It is as abſurd to imagine one man has a natural right over another, as to ſuppoſe one horſe has a natural right over another. If I ſee a dog commit an act of violence, I excuſe him; he wants that natural law of reſtraint on the mind, conſcience, which orders him to abſtain from violence; therefore his committing violence is no crime in him: but if the want of this law, only, makes it no crime, it is to be ſuppoſed, were he under the dominion of this law, this act of violence would be criminal. Men are under the dominion of this law, and are therefore criminal when they tranſgreſs it.

I conſider man as an intermediate being, between the angel and the brute, whoſe mind is endued with the diſpoſitions of both: and theſe claſh one with the other. The angelic, (or what is called by Moſes, the likeneſs of God, and by Philoſophers, right reaſon,) is that ſenſe of duty, which nature hath ſtamped on the human mind, and which a man cannot obliterate or diveſt himſelf of; it is always preſent with him; it is that inward law, which his conſcience tells him, God requires he ſhould obey. The brutal part is that inclination, which diſpoſes him to gratify every deſire, which his appetites may excite. Theſe two oppoſite diſpoſitions create that war in the mind, which St. Paul ſpeaks of, when he ſays, *I find that when I would do good, evil is preſent with me. I delight in the law of God, after the inward man; but I find another law in my members, warring againſt the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of ſin, which is in my members.*" and again," *If we live after the fleſh, we ſhall die, but if, through the ſpirit,*

ſpirit, we conquer the deſires of the body, we ſhall live. To be carnally minded is death; but to be ſpiritually minded is life and peace; for the carnal mind is at enmity with God; it is not ſubject to his law, neither indeed can be.

The Almighty in placing man in this middle ſtate between the angel and the brute, and endowing his mind with the diſpoſitions of both, refers him to his own behaviour in life, to entitle him either to reward or puniſhment hereafter: his behaviour in life is his trial, which muſt determine what his future ſtate will be: *If he does well, he ſhall be rewarded; if he does evil, ſin will lye at his door.* Abſolute obedience to the divine will, or an entire neglect of it, by indulging every paſſion, are the two extremes between which every man doth act; and according as he approaches nearer to the one or the other, he becomes more or leſs virtuous or vicious. I believe the Almighty being is endued with mercy, as well as juſtice, and will have compaſſion in proportion to our infirmities: this is our hope. If our minds were only endowed with the angelic part, we could have no virtue; for where there is no temptation to break a law, there can be no merit in obeying it. Were our minds endowed only with the brutal part, we could have no vice; for where there is no law to inform our minds, there can be no tranſgreſſion through diſobedience: our being endowed with both makes our trial. Should a man, ſubject to the temptations of human frailty, ſo entirely conquer them, as to act agreeably only to the angelic part of his mind, he would be, in merit, above an angel: as he who reſiſts temptations has more merit from obedience, than he who obeys, having no temptation to diſobey: of this claſs, we have no example but one, viz. Jeſus Chriſt. If a man acts only agreeably to the brutal part of his mind, he is below the brute, who, be-

cauſe he has no ſenſe of moral obligations, has therefore no law to reſtrain him; of ſuch we ſee many examples. If we enquire into the cauſes, which tempt men to this defection, we ſhall find them to proceed, either from their paſſions, from the violence of others, or from prejudice. As to the firſt, when our paſſions, whether luſt, envy, hatred, revenge, covetouſneſs, intemperance, &c. preſent themſelves to the mind, in too ſtrong a light, to give time for our reaſon to examine, or our virtue to reſiſt, we ſearch after excuſes for our actions; we flatter ourſelves with the thought, that God would not have endowed us with paſſions, and at the ſame time have forbid the gratification of them. We will not allow, that our being endowed with them, is only to try our virtue: we argue, that as theſe paſſions are natural, ſo whatever nature directs, ſhould be obeyed. This indeed is a proper argument for brutes to uſe, who have no conſcious rule of duty to curb their wills; but cannot be uſed by men, who acknowledge an inward ſenſe of duty, to reſtrain their appetites, by truth and juſtice.

We often obſerve, that men will indulge themſelves in ſome particular vices, while they hold others in abhorrence; and will exclaim againſt thoſe who indulge paſſions, which their own diſpoſitions do not tempt them to gratify. The crime in both is equal. Adultery, revenge, and oppreſſion are as criminal as murder, theft, or perjury. The law is equally obligatory in any one part as in another; and in the whole as in any one part. There are ſome men ſo abandoned as to diſregard the whole law; they indulge every deſire, which their appetites preſent to their minds. They believe in no future ſtate, and therefore admit of no tie from moral duty. Should that conſcious pleaſure a man perceives in his mind from doing good, or that ſecret reproach from doing evil, even in private, be objected as a

proof

proof of a future judgment; he anſwers, that theſe ſenſations ariſe only from the prejudice of education; maxims inculcated into the minds of children, for the convenience of ſociety, which a man is no further obliged to conform to, than as the ſocial laws compel him: That fortune beſtows its favours indifferently on all men; that he only, who is moſt unconfined in his principles, has the beſt opportunity to make the proper uſe of her favours: That when a man dies, his body becomes earth, and nouriſhment for that, of which another man's body may be compoſed: That to ſuppoſe a reſurrection of the body, muſt alſo ſuppoſe a re-exiſtence of its parts; but theſe parts having paſſed thro' ſeveral bodies, each of which will have an equal title to them at the ſuppoſed reſurrection; he aſks, to which individual can they properly belong? He therefore denies any future reſurrection, any future ſtate of examination, or any future rewards and puniſhments. This argument was anſwered by Jeſus Chriſt, on the queſtion (put to him by the Sadducees) whoſe wife (of the ſeven) ſhe ſhould be at the reſurrection, who had ſeven huſbands on earth? he told them, they erred; for that at the reſurrection, men would become beings uncapable of any ſenſual relation; for they ſhould be then as the angels or ſpirits, who are not cloathed with a material ſubſtance.

When a man once eſtabliſhes this principle in his mind, of no future exiſtence, he becomes tied by no rule. As he expects neither happineſs nor miſery beyond this life, his intereſt here becomes his conſcience, and his reaſon is dedicated to the promotion of it. It would be impoſſible to account for the actions of ſome men, but on this ſuppoſition. Such a man is of the utmoſt danger to ſociety; for ſociety cannot be ſupported, but on a ſuppoſition, that in every man's mind, there is ſome tie, ſome inward law,

law, that will oblige him to tell truth, even againſt his intereſt: in him there is none. No ſociety therefore allows the open profeſſion of ſuch tenets; he who thinks thus, muſt conceal his thoughts.

Beſides ſenſual deſires, pride and vanity lead the mind into groſs errors. Pride is the conceit of a merit, ſuperior to others, ariſing either from birth, riches, ſtation of life, or a ſuppoſed ſuperior excellence, either in the body or mind of a perſon, which makes him deſpiſe thoſe of a lower order, as below him in merit. He takes the lot aſſigned him, as his proper right, independent of Providence. It is the moſt fooliſh, the moſt ridiculous of all paſſions. He does not conſider, that before he came into life, he was nothing; he had neither merit nor option to claim any particular ſtation in the creation; that whatever ſtation a perſon is placed in, or according to whatever endowments his mind poſſeſſes ſuperior to others, his Maker will require a ſuitable return from him. The potter, of the ſame clay maketh one veſſel to honour, and another to diſhonour; of the ſame lump he maketh both. Shall the thing formed ſay to him that formed it, *why haſt thou made me thus?* What the potter requires is, that each veſſel ſhould execute the purpoſe for which it was made. Thus if a man is born to power, God requires he ſhould ſee juſtice done to thoſe, over whom he hath appointed him: if he is born to riches, his Maker, who hath entruſted him with means to relieve the diſtreſſed, requires he ſhould aſſiſt thoſe who want his help: if with ſuperior ſtrength, he is to aſſiſt the weak. Each perſon is to perform his part agreeably to thoſe powers with which he is endowed by his maker; but if he employs thoſe endowments to other purpoſes than thoſe for which they were conferred, he abuſes his truſt. If he is tyrannical, avaricious, if he deſpiſes, deceives or diſtreſſes others:

if

if he compels them to be ſubſervient to his will, his ſuperior ſtation in life becomes not his merit, but his curſe, and will be his condemnation. He has converted to the gratification of his own paſſions, what was entruſted to him, for the aſſiſtance of others. Jeremiah ſays, *Let not the wiſe man glory in his wiſdom, the mighty man in his ſtrength, or the rich man in his riches; but the Lord ſaith, let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he knoweth me, who exerciſe judgment, loving kindneſs and righteouſneſs on the earth.*

As the imagination of ſuperior excellence from an accidental ſtation in life, makes the fooliſh man proud: ſo doth the conceit of the mind's ſuperior knowledge, make the wiſe man vain. It was vanity in philoſophers which produced ſo many different ſects and ſyſtems. Each ſect conceived their wiſdom ſufficient to penetrate into the Divine councils; they judged of the wiſdom of the Divinity, by their own capacities; and concluded, that in giving laws to nature, God muſt have acted after their imaginations; and that what they thought beſt, muſt have been the rule he acted by. But the more we ſearch into nature the more we diſcover our folly; and later diſcoveries have ſucceſſively ſhewn their miſtakes. It was at firſt imagined that the earth was a wide extended plain; but it was afterwards found, that the ſun did not ſhine in the ſame direction, on the ſame day of the year, on places removed further north or ſouth; they concluded from thence, that the earth could not be a plain, but muſt be round. It continued for a long time an unconteſted belief, that the earth was the centre of the univerſe, and that the whole expanded firmament whirled round it, in four and twenty hours. This has been alſo exploded of late years, as a ſuppoſition unneceſſary to have recourſe to, and inconſiſtent with

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probability; as the ſame appearances would happen in the heavens, were the earth to move round its axis in that time, as if all the heavenly bodies ſhould roll round the earth. The following ſyſtem was then adopted, viz. that the earth turned round on its axis in twenty-four hours, whence day and night; that it moved round the ſun in a year's time, whence the different appearances of the ſtars, at different times of the year; that this motion was in a plane, not at right angles to its axis, whence the different ſeaſons of the year. At firſt, the belief of this was judged, not only wrong, but wicked. Gallileo, (not much above a century ago,) was put into the inquiſition for aſſerting this. At preſent every one thinks as Gallileo did.

Deſcartes thought the planets were carried round the ſun, ſuſpended in fluids, like corks ſwimming in water. Theſe ſtreams, he called vortices.

Sir Iſaac Newton ſhewed, that there was no occaſion for ſuch complicated machinery to account for their motions; but that the gravity they were at firſt endowed with, the diſtance they were placed at from the ſun, and the motion originally communicated to them, (provided they moved in vacuo) ſufficiently accounted for the order obſerved by the planets: that thoſe three powers, being in exact proportion one to the other, was what kept their courſes regular. As this is the moſt ſimple ſyſtem, ſo it is the moſt agreeable to what we conceive nature to be directed by. The tides are ſuppoſed to be occaſioned by a compound cauſe, viz, the diurnal rotation of the earth round its axis, and the monthly rotation of the earth and moon, round their common centre.

The nature of the ſun is too obſcure for the vanity of philoſophers to attempt to explain: we even know not, whether the continual expence of light and heat has at all diminiſhed its power. The length of human life

life is too ſhort to enable men to make experiments to determine this. There is however one circumſtance, which would incline us to think that the heat of the ſun is not ſo great at preſent as it was formerly. There are ſome countries, ſuch as the Orkneys and Shetland, where the cold is too intenſe to allow trees to grow at preſent; yet, from the ſtumps and roots of trees found there, it is evident theſe places were formerly overrun with woods. But vanity is a vice not peculiar to the wiſe; for among the loweſt, the moſt ignorant claſs of men, we find thoſe who pride themſelves in knowing, and maintain themſelves by ſhewing, that in the moſt triſling, the moſt inſignificant endowments they excell others. Jugglers and ropedancers are evidences of this.

Honour is a ſpecies of vanity eſteemed a virtue in the world: it bears in ſome things a near reſemblance to honeſty; but on examination, they are eaſily diſtinguiſhed. The principles of an honeſt man ariſe from a fear of offending God; thoſe of a man of honour, from a fear of leſſening the eſteem which other men entertain of him. Fear is the motive which ſpurs on both to their reſpective purpoſes; and, altho' they have different ends in view, they often produce the ſame effect. Honeſty proceeds from a fear of offending God by being unjuſt; honour proceeds from a fear of leſſening one's eſteem with men. Honeſty is juſt in all things; honour is ſo alſo in ſmall matters; it ſcorns to be unjuſt in trifles; but for the increaſe of worldly power and dignity, it will not heſitate to throw juſtice aſide. Honour will not ſteal, but it will rob. Julius Cæſar was a man of the leaſt honeſty, and of the greateſt honour of any man in the world: he ſcorned to reſent private injuries: Cicero tells us, that theſe were the only things he forgot. Yet he overturned the laws of his country, deſtroyed liberty, and made both

both it and the reſt of the world his ſlaves: but he took care, that they, whom he had reduced to that ſtate, ſhould obſerve ſtrict juſtice to one another. This we obſerve to be the general practice of uſurpers. The Romans, in their conqueſts, deſtroyed all thoſe who would not ſubmit to be their ſlaves; but for thoſe who did ſubmit, they inſtituted laws, to oblige them to behave with juſtice to one another. Simple honeſty is held by the world to be a cowardly, or at beſt a negative virtue. It is always on the defenſive, like one clad in armour, which it dares at no time throw off. But honour is held a brave, a daring quality, which ſcorns danger; it is made to rule and command; and will puniſh any one who dares to diſpute its will, or queſtion its integrity. A man of honour muſt be ſuppoſed incapable of doing wrong; yet a man of honour will lie with his friend's wife, he will baſtardize his eſtate, and put the huſband afterwards to death, if he preſumes to tell him, he did wrong. He dares no more refuſe a fine woman, who is willing to be debauched, (altho' his friend's wife) than a challenge from a man to fight him. His reputation is his conſcience: his concern is not, what he knows himſelf to be, but what the world dare ſay of him; to their opinion he is a ſlave. This made Alexander exclaim, *how much fatigue do I undergo to gain the eſteem of the Atheniens*! A man of honour will undergo as much in ſupport of his reputation and dignity, as a man of honeſty can for his conſcience; he will die for it; be his engagements right or wrong, no future information can diſengage him from his promiſe; he has pawned his honour to perform it, and cannot forfeit it. A man of honour is more bound by that, than by his oath, or any moral obligation. In a late public trial, the judges were applyed to in theſe words,

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Gentlemen, I appeal to your oath, or, what is more, I appeal to your honour.

The next cauſe which induces men to deviate from truth, is violence, or that compulſion which tyrants uſe over the minds of their ſubjects. Nebuchadnezzar was a tyrant, and exacted obedience from the minds, as well as from the bodies of his ſubjects. He made an image, and ordered all men to worſhip it, under the penalty of being thrown into the fire. The Roman pontiffs have done the ſame. Henry the eighth did the ſame: in ſhort all tyrants exact the ſame implicit conformity from the minds, as in the actions of their ſubjects. Violence, altho' coloured over with the ſpecious name of ambition, and dignified with the title of glory, is moſt oppoſite to natural juſtice, and moſt deſtructive to ſociety, and to the human race of any other paſſion. The Almighty created all men innocent, and equally free, and requires they ſhould continue ſo. Nothing but ſelf-defence can authorize one man to hurt another, and deprive him of liberty. When a man throws his innocence aſide, and by force or craft enſlaves another, he throws aſide all regard to juſtice and conſcience. He muſt either ſuppoſe there is no God, who obſerves his actions, and can penetrate into his mind; or that God doth not require an obſervance of his laws from thoſe, whom he hath endowed with ſuperior ſtrength, either of body or mind, to compell or circumvent others; he muſt inſtitute a new religion, more agreeable to his deſigns than that built on conſcience. By natural juſtice, it is an abſurd poſition, that when a man, by force or craft, brings another into ſubjection, and deprives him of his liberty, that it ſhould be deemed a crime in that other, to endeavour to recover his liberty: yet nothing is more common, than to claim a legal dominion, from the right of conqueſt; and to puniſh as cri-

criminal thoſe, who endeavour to throw off this yoke. As this ſyſtem of duty is quite different from the liberty, which nature hath given every man a right to; tyrants who rob mankind of their natural right, are therefore obliged, in ſupport of their authority, to change both the object of worſhip, and ſyſtem of duty. Thus in the old world, violence was immediately followed by a change in the object of worſhip; from the true God to the hoſt of Heaven, to the Sun, Moon, and Stars. Nothing makes the human mind degenerate ſo much as ſlavery; men in that ſtate will ſacrifice their reaſon to their ſafety, they are too much taken up in obſerving the will of their maſters, to examine into the propriety of the orders they receive, or think with liberty for themſelves; when the puniſhment for diſobedience is the forfeiture of their lives. The great, the beneficent effects of the ſun and moon were perceived by every one; by them nature ſeemed regulated: and men were made to believe, that theſe viſible objects, were the beings to whom they owed their exiſtence. To the ſtars they attributed the different deſtinies of men; that according as they ſhewed themſelves at their birth, ſo were their lives and fortunes ordained to be afterwards. From this aroſe aſtrology, a prejudice not yet rooted out of weak minds. Theſe are the means which tyrants uſe, the maxims they inculcate, to keep their ſubjects in obedience; for as the Stars had predeſtinated them to rule; they told their ſubjects it was highly impious in them to withſtand the decrees of fate, by contradicting them. Men thus forced to give up their reaſon, were eaſily led into greater abſurdities. Men of renown, whoſe names tradition had handed down, as inventors of arts, became to be conſidered as Gods, who had come to reſide on earth for ſome time, for the inſtruction of mankind Hence that multiplicity of Gods they worſhipped.

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For it is the policy of a tyrant, to cruſh every attempt towards freedom of thought or judgment, in the minds of his ſubjects: his buſineſs is to keep them in ignorance, and the more abſurdities he can bring them to believe, the ſtronger hold he has of their wills, and the more certain he is of their obedience. Upon this is founded that maxim of the clergy; *It is dangerous, for the laity to know much.* On a liberty of enquiry depends learning, and it was a great overſight in Leo the tenth, to encourage it by promoting printing. The Turkiſh Mufti was wiſer: he found that printing promoted learning, and learning made men inquiſitive: he therefore ſuppreſſed all printing in the Turkiſh dominions. I would not be thought to infer from this, that ſuch an unbounded liberty is allowable, as that there ſhould be no ſubordination among men: were every man to adhere ſtrictly to the obſervance of truth before God, and juſtice and mercy towards his fellow creatures, there would be no occaſion for ſubordination. Iſaiah's words would then come to paſs, *The wolf ſhould dwell with the lamb, and the leopard ly down with the kid, and the earth would be full of the knowledge of the Lord.* But as that is not the preſent ſtate of mankind, where attempts from fraud and violence, render it neceſſary for men, for mutual defence and protection, to enter into ſocieties, the better to protect themſelves, either againſt foreign enemies, or domeſtic frauds, they were obliged to inſtitute laws, which every one willing to be a member of that ſociety, engaged to obſerve, under the penalties then ſpecified. But to have theſe laws properly executed, it was neceſſary to delegate the judicial and executive power, into the hands of ſome particular men, of whoſe juſtice they had a good opinion, and whoſe example might induce others, more readily to conform to the laws. Or if an invaſion from a foreign enemy, obliged them

to join in mutual defence; in this time of danger it was neceſſary, to inveſt ſome individuals, of wiſdom and fortitude, with power to direct and command them; that the repelling the common enemy might be executed with moſt efficacy and diſpatch. This could not be done, were every one of the ſociety to give his opinion, before any reſolution was carried into execution. But theſe magiſtrates and commanders, had this truſt conferred on them, merely from the choice of the people. The ſociety ſtill kept a power in themſelves, to degrade or puniſh them, if they made a wrong uſe of the power committed to them; or did not properly anſwer the purpoſes, for which they were entruſted with that power. Theſe commanders never claimed this preference from natural right: they owed it to the choice of the people, and were as much under the laws of the ſociety, as any other member of it. This is what conſtitutes a free ſtate, and in this manner doth it differ from a tyrannical one.

CHAPTER II.

THE third and principal cauſe of error, which keeps the mind moſt firmly in bondage, is prejudice, or a perſuaſion of a thing being true which is falſe; it is a habit of belief inſtilled into us, before we are able to judge for ourſelves, and becomes ſo confirmed through time, that we are unwilling to change our belief on any future information: for ſhould reaſon afterwards object to it; rather than change our opinions, we are apt to think our reaſon not rightly informed; and continue to believe, contrary to conviction. Perſuaſion and conviction differ in this; one is a belief of the truth of a thing aſſerted, from the good opinion we have of the knowledge and ſincerity of him who reports it. Conviction is the belief of a thing, not from the teſtimony of others, but in conſequence of ſelf evident principles. There are certain axioms in morals, as well as in phyſics, univerſally aſſented to by the human mind; the knowledge of which ariſes altogether from nature. The belief in myſteries and hiſtorical relations, we may be perſuaded to admit of, but they do not admit of conviction. On the other hand, the truth of a propoſition in Euclid is built on conviction; the mind is no way byas'd by opinion, or led aſtray by prejudice; it refers to nothing for a proof, but what the mind allows as ſelf-evident.

When violence had obliged men, for mutual defence, to form themſelves into ſocieties, it was found neceſſary, firſt to inſtitute laws, by which the ſociety ſhould be governed, and then to inveſt ſome particular men with power to enforce the execution of theſe laws. But it was ſoon found, that ſome of

thoſe who took the advantage of public protection from foreign enemies, did not obſerve juſtice to one another. They therefore decreed puniſhments for ſuch as tranſgreſſed the laws. But altho' the dread of puniſhment might deter men from open crimes, yet ſecret ones could not be judged of, where an open proof was wanting; and where no witneſs or circumſtance appeared ſufficient to detect the crime, the judges were obliged to appeal to the criminal himſelf: They exacted an oath, an appeal to the Divine power, and made him imprecate the wrath of God on himſelf and his children, if what he then averred, was not truth. But in order to make men obſerve their oaths, they muſt firſt be made to underſtand the nature of one, and what they were to expect if they ſwore falſely. Thus religion became neceſſary for government, in order to inforce good morals in the minds of the ignorant, for without it ſociety could not ſubſiſt. Truth is a duty we owe to God, and juſtice that which we owe to men. No ſociety can ſubſiſt, whoſe laws are not built on theſe two principles. It is neceſſary for that purpoſe, that men ſhould believe, that the divine Being would certainly judge all men, and as certainly puniſh ſuch who ſwore falſely. To convince men of this, their inſtructors appealed to their own minds, where every one might perceive a conſcious ſenſe of what was good and evil; and thereby be convinced that this inward principle was given, to direct them in their duty; that as this inward law was impreſſed, for them to obſerve; ſo if they would not obſerve it, they would certainly be puniſhed by God for diſobedience. And in order to keep up in the minds of the people, a terror of offending the Divine power, to whom the innermoſt ſecrets of hearts were known; it was found neceſſary to appoint ſome men from among them, of approved morals and knowledge, whoſe ſole buſineſs

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it ſhould be, to ſhew the neceſſity men were under, to obſerve good morals; if they would eſcape the puniſhments which God would inflict on thoſe who acted otherwiſe. And the better to enable thoſe teachers to dedicate their whole time to this ſo neceſſary purpoſe, they were exempted from all other care or burthen of the ſtate; and ſupplied by the community, with all the neceſſaries of life, without any labour of their own. Thus were the clergy inſtituted by civil power, for civil purpoſes. This inſtitution was certainly both wiſe and neceſſary; and had it continued uncorrupted, and directed only for thoſe purpoſes, for which it was inſtituted, mankind would have been both good men and good citizens. The office of a teacher begets, in the minds of thoſe taught, an awe towards his perſon, and a deference to what he ſays. This made the vulgar place confidence in the knowledge and integrity of thoſe, whoſe time and care were ſolely devoted to their inſtruction. The ignorance and avocations of the vulgar, allowed them neither leiſure nor inclination, to examine what they were deſired to believe, and if at any time their prieſts told them what did not coincide with their reaſon or apprehenſion, they imputed it, rather to their own ignorance, than to any miſtake in their teachers; for they could not be ſuppoſed to underſtand thoſe matters ſo well as they, whoſe ſole buſineſs it was to ſtudy them: So they received as truth, and conceived as duty, whatever they were deſired to believe. The clergy having got this aſcendancy over the minds of the people, took advantage of their credulity, and inſtead of improving the underſtanding of the people, they modeled their belief. They told the vulgar, that their underſtanding was too weak to judge, and therefore incapable to direct them, in what was right or wrong: that what they might conceive to be the dictates of reaſon

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and conſcience, was no further to be truſted to, than where information from them did not direct them otherwiſe; that by the office they held, they were ſubſtitutes of the Divinity, who had, in an eſpecial manner, appointed them to make known to men what his will was; that it was impious in the laity to take on themſelves to judge of what God had directed, and that a crime againſt his miniſters, was equally puniſhable, as a crime againſt himſelf.

When a man throws off his own reaſon, as inſufficient to direct him; and in its place adopts the opinion or will of another, that man becomes the ſlave of that other; he is no more to be conſidered as a rational creature, but as clay in the hands of a potter, to be moulded into whatever ſhape, and appointed for whatever uſe, he pleaſes. The clergy having obtained this dominion over the minds of the people, took every proper method to improve and ſupport their authority: they diſcouraged all free enquiry into the nature of the Deity, and the worſhip proper to be paid him: they divided him into different beings, and aſſigned to each his particular office, and proper worſhip. The natural and original moral law was thrown aſide, as too painful for men of ſtrong paſſions to be bound by; and in its place, men were directed the performance of certain ceremonies, vows and ſacrifices, as an equivalent for ſin. This new ſyſtem pleaſed the people, who could, by theſe means, both worſhip the Gods and indulge their own deſires; they greedily embraced it: The method of appeaſing the Deity was thus made eaſy. The religion of nature required neither vows, ſacrifice, nor penance; and what that is, Iſaiah tells us very plainly, *Hear the word of the Lord, and give ear unto the law of your God: bring me no more vain oblations. Incenſe is an abomination to me; the new moons and ſabbaths, the calling of aſſem-*

aſſemblies, I cannot away with: it is an iniquity. Your new moons and your appointed feaſts my ſoul hateth." And Micah ſaith "*Will the Lord be pleaſed with thouſands of rams, or ten thouſand rivers of oil? Shall I give my firſt born for my tranſgreſſions, or the fruit of my body, for the ſin of my ſoul? The Lord hath ſhewed, what he requires of thee; do juſtice, love mercy, and walk humbly with thy God.* This then is the only ſacrifice acceptable to God.

Sacrifices originally were eucharistical; an acknowledgement or thanks-giving for mercies ſhewn, as were thoſe of Cain, Abel, and Noah. Propitiatory ſacrifices took their riſe from a wrong conception of what would pleaſe the Deity, viz. that he was capable to be bribed or flattered, and that the offering ſacrifices or puniſhing themſelves, would be accepted as an equivalent for offences. Their vows were a bargain with the Deity, that if he granted their requeſts, they would recompence him by ſacrifice, or pleaſe him by puniſhing themſelves. Pythagoras offered an eucharistical ſacrifice of an hundred oxen, for being able to prove the properties of a right angled triangle. Jephtha offered a propitiatory one; he vowed, that provided God would give him victory, he would ſacrifice the firſt he ſhould meet with, coming out of his houſe on his return. The King of Moab in the ſame manner ſacrificed his ſon, which (the Jewiſh writers ſay) was accepted; and the ſame God, who conducted the armies of Iſrael, on this, changed ſides and gave victory to Moab, *and there was great indignation againſt Iſrael.* The Prieſts of Baal, when they could not prevail on him to ſhew his God-head by prayers, thought they might do it by penance; they cut themſelves with knives. 'Tis a ſtrange idea, men entertain of the Diety, to think, that ſacrifices can add to his felicity, or that puniſhing ourſelves

in time of trouble, ſhould avert his anger for crimes committed before. I believe repentance is a prevailing ſacrifice, but it ſhould proceed from a ſenſe of our crimes, not of our danger. This deluſion prevails more or leſs, as learning and liberty of thinking is more or leſs encouraged. Among the Grecian and Roman philoſophers, ſome came back, in a great meaſure, to the original religion of nature; they ridiculed the impoſtures of the prieſts. Socrates was put to death for doing ſo; and Cato was ſurpriſed, that when two prieſts met, they did not laugh at one another. In the time of Jeſus Chriſt, men had, in a great meaſure, recovered from this deluſion: Learning prevailed; and men were laid ſo open to conviction, that chriſtianity made great progreſs among the Heathens, notwithſtanding the perſecutions it ſuffered. But the irruptions of the Northern nations, and afterwards of the Saracens, deſtroyed all learning; and men became again immerſed in ignorance: they were deſerted by civil government, and their care and thoughts were employed entirely in ſelf preſervation. In this ſtate of Anarchy, they had none to apply to but their clergy for advice. This truſt and confidence, the clergy improved to the advancement of their own power: They followed the ſame maxims, as the Heathen prieſts had done, and in order to gain proſelytes, or rather ſubjects, they made the tranſition eaſy from Paganiſm to chriſtianity: it was ſubjects more than converts they wanted: They therefore, to induce men more readily to conform, introduced rites and ceremonies ſimilar to the pagan worſhip; they divided the Godhead into three, to anſwer the three brothers, Jupiter, Neptune, and Pluto; and introduced images inſtead of idols. But altho' chriſtianity was a religion of liberty, they ordered the laity not to ſearch into it, leſt they ſhould know their liberty.

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However there were ſome parts of the ſcriptures, which they took care ſhould be known, viz. that Chriſt had ſaid, *Whoſe ſoever ſins ye remit, they ſhall be remitted; and whoſoever ſins ye retain, they ſhall be retained;* and that the gates of heaven were open and ſhut at their command. When men were induced to believe, that their future happineſs or miſery depended on the will of the clergy, they paid an implicit obedience, in all things, to their orders: they commanded the world, and diſpoſed of kingdoms at their pleaſure. The kingdom of Chriſt was not a kingdom of this world, but theirs was; they uſed his religion for other purpoſes than he did. No ſenſe of conſcience, of right or wrong, durſt be objected to their orders: they relied altogether on the ignorance, and eſtabliſhed prejudice of the vulgar, to ſupport their authority; and extended their arrogance to ſuch unreaſonable lengths, as induced men at laſt to enquire and examine, by what authority, they ordered, as religious duties, what ſeemed ſo inconſiſtent with natural reaſon. When ever prejudice yields ſo far, as to allow a doubt in the mind, and any free enquiry to be made, it loſes its dominion: Error cannot ſupport itſelf long, if not protected by ignorance: Prejudice without this ſupport, turns weak by degrees; and at laſt vaniſhes. The more men examined the ſcriptures and the precepts of Jeſus Chriſt, the more they found their reaſon had been led aſtray, and their judgment impoſed on. As learning increaſed, and freedom of thought was allowed, ignorance and ſuperſtition loſt ground: When men's belief was puſhed too far, the bubble broke, and they came back to a reference to thoſe original laws, conſcience and reaſon, as the real judges to which only they ought to appeal to inform the mind and direct the belief in the doctrine of Chriſt.

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Some others there were, who would not take the trouble of an examination; but, accuſtomed only to view religion in the manner preſcribed by the clergy, looked on their ſuppoſition of a divinity, as inconſiſtent with reaſon; as that the divine Being ſhould delegate his power to wicked and immoral men, to diſtribute eternal rewards and puniſhments, according as beſt ſuited their purpoſes, or wordly intereſts; merely becauſe ſuch men were Prieſts. The juſtice of a God, they conceived to be irreconcileable to the immoral lives of thoſe who claimed this power. They therefore threw off, as falſe altogether, any ſuppoſition of a God, or Divine Providence. Leo the tenth ſaid, he was certain there was neither a God nor a Providence; for if there were, he never would have placed him at the head of his church. The ſame conſideration hath raiſed in Turkey a ſet of Atheiſts, who call themſelves *Muſerim*, or we have the ſecret. Mahomet Effendi died a martyr to this opinion; he ſaid, his regard for truth obliged him to think ſo; for if there were ſuch a being as a God, he would not have allowed him to live, who was a ſcorner and diſpiſer of his Divine Eſſence.

If atheiſm prevails any where in the chriſtian world, it muſt be at Rome, where the immoral lives of the clergy, the power they aſſume from their office, and the means they uſe to attain to theſe offices, are ſo inconſiſtent with the idea of an all juſt, omnipotent and omnipreſent being, by whoſe wiſdom and providence, the world ſhould be directed, that they conclude all religion to be a forgery, and that there can be neither God nor Providence to direct the world.

Thus far is prejudice capable to lead the mind aſtray, and thence we may ſee what fatal errors it may incline us to entertain, and what wrong actions

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it may induce us to commit. I ſhall therefore throw aſide all evidence, built merely on the aſſertion of others; and conſider things only as my reaſon ſupports my belief. I diſregard the cenſure of the clergy, I look on my reaſon and conſcience to be implanted in me by God, for to direct my judgment; and that they are to be the witneſſes, to give evidence at the laſt day, of my thoughts and actions while on earth. I look on it as blaſphemy, to put this evidence of God, in competition with the aſſertions of men. And I am convinced that I ſhall be acquitted or condemned, as I ſhall be found to have acted agreeable or diſagreeable to their admonition, and that it will not be accepted, as an excuſe for my tranſgreſſions, that a diffidence of my own judgment, induced me to throw aſide theſe monitors implanted in me by God, and in their place to have adopted the opinions of fallible men.

The here appears to call the Visitation and
Inſtruction of the Almighty a "Holy
Spirit:" Reason & Conscience & although an
advocate for liberty shews himself stile to
be in bondage & slavery to the borrowed
terms of the Schoolmen: viz "reason
& conscience" as it is evident the writer
considers what he calls conscience as
reason &
of the Divine essence & the word not
we adds "I look on it as blasphemy,
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CHAPTER III.

ALL ideas of things external, are conveyed to us by our ſenſes; and the propriety of theſe ideas are afterwards examined by our reaſon. When I look up on the Heavens, the ſun, moon and ſtars, and that immenſe expanded ſpace occupied by them; when I conſider that each of theſe fixed ſtars may probably be ſuch a ſun as ours, ſurrounded with planets, inhabited worlds, as ours is; when I ſtretch my imagination to that infinite unbounded ſpace beyond the moſt diſtant ſtar we can obſerve, which, in all probability, is filled with other ſtars or ſuns illuminating an infinity of different worlds; I muſt admire the omnipotence of that Being which made them. If I turn my thoughts to this our Globe, that ſmall portion of the univerſe allotted to us, and examine the methods, which nature follows in its various operations; if I conſider the return of the ſeaſons, ſo neceſſary for vegetation; if I look on the animal and vegetable world, and examine their organs, by which life is carried on in them; how the form and diſpoſition of each, is exactly ſuited to its element, to its climate and nouriſhment; it raiſes in my mind ſome idea of that infinite wiſdom, by which they are ſo diſpoſed.

I find vegetables are the ultimate ſupport of animals. The earth is the common mother of all vegetables: it affords nouriſhment for every plant: the ſame earth produces what is ſalutary and poiſonous. According as the moiſture extracted from it, is differently modified by the organs of the ſeed, ſo doth the vegetable contract different qualities from the ſame ſoil; the organs of each converting the imbibed moiſture, into juices of the nature of the plant.

plant. It is not the ſoil which alters the nature of a plant; for altho' different plants are produced in different climates, yet if an artificial climate is made in any place, ſimilar to a foreign one, the plants of that foreign climate, will grow in that artificial one. In each, rain-water is converted into the proper ſolid ſubſtance of the plant, and produces its peculiar fruit. Both vegetables and animals, left to nature, have their ſtated time of life; they have their infancy, their maturity, ſhed their ſeed, and die in their ſtated time. The return of the ſeaſons directs the operations of nature in the vegetable world, and in a great many of the animal. All animals have a will, a choice, a thinking faculty in them, each after its kind: They ſearch for their nouriſhment; they are capable of pain and pleaſure; they avoid danger; they defend themſelves when attacked, and endeavour to offend their enemies. In all of them, infancy and innocence go together: as they increaſe in age and ſtrength, ſo do their minds enlarge, and put on that diſpoſition peculiar to their ſpecies. When their body is in its greateſt vigour, their thinking faculty, or natural diſpoſition, is in its greateſt ſtrength; as they grow old and decrepit, their thinking faculty diminiſhes in proportion; and they become ſtupid or inſenſible at laſt.

As the different modifications in the ſeed of vegetables, make their ſhape and qualities different, ſo, in the animal creation, doth the different modification in the brain, give them different degrees of knowledge, diſpoſitions and paſſions. The orders and operations of the Creator, are too intricate and extenſive, for the human mind to comprehend; and the only method we have to attain to knowledge, is by obſerving and following nature in our ſearch after truth. A man who purſues this method may be right, but he who proceeds to judgment, without obſerv-

obſerving it, will find himſelf miſtaken in his purſuits.

It has been long a diſpute, at what time the world began: the vanity of ſome nations has made them ſtretch back their progenitors to an immenſe time: I ſhall examine the probability of their pretenſions, by the following principles. All animals receive their nouriſhment immediately or ultimately from vegetables, and all vegetables receive theirs from the mould on the ſurface of the earth. But I obſerve that earth alone will not produce vegetables: moiſture and heat muſt be joined with it: without rain the earth would produce nothing; I conclude from thence, that rain muſt have been from the beginning. But I obſerve that rain does more than merely moiſten the earth; there is an overplus that is carried off to the ſea by the rivers, and conſtantly takes along with it, ſome of that mould on which it falls. This occaſions a continual waſte of the earth, and muſt at laſt, carry along with it every particle capable of being moved by it. The ſea muſt riſe in proportion to the earth ſo waſhed into it; and the earth become lower in the ſame proportion to what is carried off from it by rain. Nothing but rocks will at laſt remain. Vegetation muſt ceaſe for want of earth; and the animal world muſt become extinct for want of nouriſhment. Beſides the waſte made by rain, we find, in the vegetative parts of the earth, a conſtant diſpoſition to petrifaction. The ſhapes and ſubſtances obſerved in many rocks and ſtones, ſhow that theſe rocks and ſtones were formerly in a ſoft ſtate, capable of affording nouriſhment to vegetables, which they cannot do now. The continuation of this converſion is another cauſe, why vegetation muſt ceaſe in time. Nothing capable of waſte can be eternal; ſo that there muſt have been a time, when this waſte, or, in other words, when the world began:

began: and this waſte is, by obſervation, too great to allow the beginning of it, to be ſo far back as the the Egyptian, the Chaldaic or Chineſe reports make it.

When we receive the knowledge of things paſt by tradition only; and when that tradition differs among different nations, as to point of time; we muſt judge of the truth of their different aſſertions by analogy. If the accounts we have of ſome parts of the world, as ſet down by hiſtorians, give us a juſt deſcription of the ſtate theſe parts were in, a thouſand years ago; and compare it with that, in which we find them at preſent; we may judge ſomewhat of the waſte committed on the land, and how much the ſea has riſen, during that time. The Campania of Rome was in the time of the Sabins, and long afterwards, a healthful and well inhabited country. Since that, the ſurface of the ſea has riſen ſo high, as to make it a deſolate, unhealthy bog; there is not now a ſufficient fall, to drain off the waters. In the time of the Romans, we read of no ditches employed, to keep out the ſea from the low grounds of Holland. Goodwin Sands were formerly an arable, well inhabited country, until the ſea, by degrees, overflowed it. What was formerly the pavement of Rome, is now twenty feet below the ſurface of the Tyber. Carthage, formerly the greateſt ſea port in the world, is now under water. Where Memphis the metropolis of Egypt ſtood, is now the channel of the Nile. The vaſt quantities of trees found in bogs, ſhew that theſe were woods formerly, which are now covered over by the mould, waſhed down from the neighbouring higher grounds. We ourſelves obſerve, that houſes built in flat ſeaport towns, are obliged every thirty or forty years, to be raiſed in their foundation, to prevent their being overflowed by the tides. It has been alledged by

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ſome, that altho' the ſea gains on the land in ſome places, yet the land gains from the ſea in others; as there are many ſeaports (formerly good harbours for ſhipping) which are now choked up; and the land carried out much beyond them. This circumſtance never happens, but in the mouths of rivers, where the mould brought down by them from the land, is allowed to ſubſide; for when the force which carried it down is taken off, it ſtops and forms a heap: this is the occaſion of bars in the mouths of rivers. From theſe circumſtances we may form ſome judgment, how far back a proportionate waſte will allow us to go, to fix a time when this waſte began: and I believe it would be difficult, by this analyſis, to carry the beginning of it, further back than Moſes has done; I therefore take his account to be the juſteſt, as it comes neareſt to what we obſerve in nature.

I believe that Moſes gave a juſt account of what happened in the beginning of time; he is at leaſt the author I ſhall follow; but that what he wrote, is juſtly handed down to us by tranſlators, I do not believe: for altho' the Hebrews, before their captivity, were debarred, by their conſtitution, from a free intercourſe with other nations, and might, for ſo long, preſerve their language pure; yet from their conqueſt and captivity by the Babylonians, they were ever after, more or leſs under the dominion of other nations; and their language muſt have been corrupted by their intercourſe with them. The laws preſcribed by theſe different conquerors, neceſſarily introduced words and phraſes, different from that original language in which Moſes expreſſed himſelf. Their language would, by this means, change from what it had been. The idioms belonging to words of uncertain meaning, are only judged of, from a probability of what they might ſignify, agreeably to the ſenſe of the

the context. That the tranſlators of the Hebrew have ſometimes miſinterpreted words, may be known by one quite ignorant of that language. It is ſaid (Ezekiel, Chap. 29th, verſe 10th) *I will make the land of Egypt utterly waſte and deſolate, from the tower of Syene, even unto the borders of Ethiophia.* This tranſlation is plainly abſurd; Syenè is a frontier town between Egypt and Ethiophia, ſo that what they tranſlate Ethiophia, ſhould be Arabia; which is the oppoſite border of Egypt to the tower of Syenè. Wherefore any incongruity, which I may find in Moſes's account of the creation, I ſhall impute to a miſtake in the tranſlators, and ſubſtitute what I think ought rationally to have been his meaning.

CHAPTER IV.

Of the CREATION.

MOSES acquaints us, that the creation of the world took up the ſpace of ſix days; after which it was left to the direction of nature. He ſays, *In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth, that the earth was without form and void; and darkneſs was upon the face of the deep.* By the earth's being without form and void, I underſtand, that it was endowed with no other quality beſides ſubſtance and extenſion; and by darkneſs being upon the face of the deep, I underſtand that matter was at abſolute reſt. The firſt act of the divine power on matter is thus expreſſed, *The Spirit of God moved on the face of the waters*, or on the confuſed mixed Chaos. By this I conceive is meant, the firſt inſtitution of nature, when matter was divided into fluid and ſolid particles, and each particle was endowed with its peculiar qualities, either with regard to itſelf, or what it might acquire by being in conjunction with others. Mutual attraction, every particle was more or leſs endowed with; theſe between whom it was ſtrongeſt conſtituted the ſolid part of the earth, of ſuch an irregular ſhape as their proximity might induce them to put on; and gravity, which operated on the whole maſs of matter, formed the whole into a globe.

The firſt day's work is, *Let there be light and there was light, and the evening and the morning were the firſt day.* As light is here put as the *Antitheſis* to what was before called *darkneſs being on the face of the deep*, or abſolute reſt; I muſt conceive that by *light* is meant motion as the firſt

day's

day's work. It is the earth's turning round its axis, which makes the day; and I believe, that the firſt act after the inſtitution of nature, was to put the earth in motion. It is the rotation of the globe round its axis, and not light and darkneſs which conſtitutes the day. Any point on the ſurface of the earth, from its leaving its oppoſition to a point in the heavens, until it returns to it, that ſpace of time it takes up to perform this, is called the day: The receding from that point, until it comes to an oppoſite point in the heavens, is called by Moſes the evening; and when by the continued rotation, it comes oppoſite to the point it firſt left; he calls that ſpace of time the morning: he therefore puts the evening before the morning. Immediately on the earth's being made to turn round, there muſt have followed a ſeparation of the elements. The earth's turning round its axis, created a new power, centrifugal force, which counteracts gravity, or a tendency to the centre. This centrifugal force, would act with greateſt power, on the lighteſt particles: Thoſe it would throw off to the greateſt diſtance. The air as the lighteſt, was therefore thrown off at the greateſt diſtance; the dry land appeared, and the ſea took up the place left in the interſtices of it. Water, altho' ſpecifically heavier than air, is ſtill capable of being expanded by heat, ſo as to make it become lighter than air. It will then mount up, until the cold makes it of equal gravity with the air, and there it will form clouds. This ſuſpenſion by evaporation is what I conceive to be meant by the firmament's dividing the waters from the waters. What is the exact difference between water and air, I cannot determine, but they are certainly capable of mixing and uniting, one with the other, according as they are affected by heat or cold. There is a heat in the earth independent of what is communicated by the ſun; if it were not

ſo, the bottom of the ſea would be always frozen, and the deeper we would dig in the earth, the colder we ſhould find it; but the reverſe of this is true. It is not the diviſion of matter into ſmaller parts, which alters its gravity: A grain of gold, or any other ſubſtance, ſuſtaining no other alteration than diviſion, is of the ſame ſpecific gravity, whether it be ſingle, or joined to a million of others. In like manner a drop of water, if not expanded or rarified by heat, would never riſe and mix with a lighter element. We know of no fluids, or matter capable of being made liquid by heat, even gold, but will evaporate or become lighter than air, and ſo long as the heat acts upon them with ſufficient force, they will contiuue to riſe in it; but when this heat ceaſes, theſe rarified particles will collapſe, and recover their ſpecific gravity.

As extreme heat makes water riſe, and mix with air; ſo doth extreme cold make air condenſe and mix with water. Thus water frozen, ſwims on the top, from the air being mixed with it; but on melting, it throws off this air, and returns to its natural gravity. A ſtone locked up in the earth by the froſt, is in contact with the earth about it; but on a ſucceeding thaw, the earth will be found to have receded; the ſhape of the ſtone is preſerved in the mould, but the ſpace it occupied during the froſt, is greatly enlarged; the air incorporated with the water by the froſt, has now ſeparated and gone off, and the particles of earth and water, which ſurrounded it, are come into a cloſer contact. When the common roads have been frozen, and a thaw follows, the ground is covered with a froth, like ſoap ſuds; the air is then diſengaged from the water, but ſtill ſhews, by the bubbles on the ſurface, from whence it came laſt. Extreme heat makes

water

water become as air, and extreme cold ſo condenſes the air, as to make it mix with water.

The elements being diſpoſed into their proper places, the next work is the creation of vegetables. *God created every plant of the field, and every herb before it grew; he placed them in the ground and ſaid, Let the earth bring forth graſs, the herb yielding ſeed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after its kind, whoſe ſeed is in itſelf.* The vegetables being planted, the ſun, and moon, are next created, or rather ſhew themſelves on the fourth day, *to give light to the firmament of heaven, to divide the day from the night, and to be for ſigns and for ſeaſons, for days and years; the ſun to rule the day, and the moon the night.* It is evident from this, that before the creation of the ſun, it was not light and darkneſs which made the day and night; ſo that what is called *light* on the firſt day's work, cannot mean what we commonly underſtand by it. It is ſubjoined, *He created the ſtars alſo.* What are here called ſtars, Moſes explains in the beginning of the ſecond chapter, *Thus the heavens and the earth were finiſhed, and all the hoſt of them.* By what is called *The hoſt of heaven* is not meant, the fixed ſtars, but the planets or wandering ſtars, which men afterwards adored, when they fell off from the worſhip of the true God: For it is natural and neceſſary to ſuppoſe, that the whole ſolar ſyſtem was created at the ſame time. As the fixed ſtars had no concern with our world, it was not Moſes's buſineſs to ſay any thing of them in his hiſtory.

The immediate conſequence of the heat of the ſun, was to exhale the moiſture, and warm the ſurface of the ground; this brought on vegetation. It is ſaid, *God had not yet cauſed it to rain, but there went up a miſt, which watered the whole face of the ground.* When vegetables were provided, God proceeded

to create animals. On the fifth day, he ſaid, *Let the waters bring forth abundantly, and fowl that may fly on the earth, every one after its kind.* On the ſixth day terreſtrial animals are created, beaſts, cattle, and every thing that creepeth on the earth, after their kind.

There is a beautiful propriety and harmony, in this account of the creation. In the beginning matter lay at reſt, in a mixed, irregular maſs, without ſhape or relation. Then nature was inſtituted. *The ſpirit of God, moved on the face of the deep.* Each particle had its peculiar qualities aſſigned to it, and ranged into its proper claſs. They formed themſelves into a globe by one univerſal quality, viz. gravity: Some unite, adhere, and form a ſolid part or land, others continue fluid, but of different gravity. In this ſtate, the earth is ſet in motion, by wheeling round its axis; on which follows a ſeparation of the elements; theſe, according as they are affected by gravity and centrifugal force, occupied different ſpaces, at a greater or ſmaller diſtance from the center. The adheſion of the ſolid parts would not allow them to move; the centrifugal force could only act upon the fluids; and the air, as the lighteſt, would be thrown off to the circumference of the ſphere. By the receſſion of the air, the waters were gathered together, they filled up the ſpace left by the air, and the dry land appeared, riſing out of the waters; on which vegetables, the food for animals, are created and implanted. The ſun is next created, whoſe heat exhaling the moiſture, brought on vegetation.

The next act was the creation of fiſhes and fowls, their elements being the firſt prepared to receive them. On the ſixth day, terreſtrial animals were created, their food being previouſly provided; as the vegetables had been three days implanted and

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increaſed. The laſt part of the creation was man; to whom God gave dominion over all other creatures. and afterwards created a companion for him, out of part of himſelf, the more to unite them in love and friendſhip. The name he gave them both was Adam. *Male and female created he them, and called their name Adam**. Theſe God diſtinguiſhed above all his other creatures, for he created them after his own likeneſs; he endowed them with faculties ſuperior to all others, he imprinted on their minds, a ſenſe of moral duties to direct them, which he had communicated to none others of his creatures; he let them know, there were other ties on their minds beſides the gratification of their paſſions; he endowed them with conſcience to be their law, and reaſon to direct them in the execution of it. After finiſhing the creation, and leaving nature to carry it on, God is ſaid to have *reſted the ſeventh day.* This expreſſion of the hiſtorian is uſed to accommodate the work of the Almighty, to the idea of human labour; for labour and fatigue are not applicable to God: It was meant to ſerve as an order for man, to dedicate the ſeventh part of his time particularly, to the worſhip of God, and the contemplation of his power. And here, I think, is a ſtrong preſumption of the truth of the Moſaic account; as no other reaſon can be given, for the diviſion of time into weeks, ſo univerſally uſed from the earlieſt ages.

When God created man male and female, he gave them a conditional command by which they might be enabled to continue in the happy ſtate in which they then were. What theſe orders were, and how they came to forfeit that happineſs, by diſobedience, is repreſented under the allegory of a garden, into which he had put them, with liberty to eat of the

* Gen. chap. v. ver. 2.

fruit of every tree, except one which grew in the middle of it. Of that they are forbid to taſte; that if they abſtained from that fruit, they ſhould never die; but that if they diſobeyed him, by eating of that fruit, they ſhould be ſubject to death as other animals were. What is called a *garden*, I take to mean the human mind, endowed with all its rational faculties and natural deſires: by the *river which watered the garden*, and afterwards divided into four branches, is meant conſcience, or the moral law of duty, commonly divided into the four cardinal virtues: by the *tree of life* is ſignified innocence, that firſt ſtate in which they were when created: by the *tree of knowledge of good and evil*, is ſignified carnal deſires: by the *ſerpent, which tempted them*, is meant luſt: by the *angel with the flaming ſword*, is meant remorſe and ſhame; and by the *coat of ſkins*, with which their nakedneſs was covered after their tranſgreſſion, is meant that natural covering of the private parts, which grows in both ſexes at the age of puberty, when carnal deſires firſt enter the mind.

It has been long an enquiry, where a local paradiſe could be ſituated, to correſpond to that extreme happineſs which Adam enjoyed in it; to the deſcription of theſe ſtrange trees which grew in it; and to the rivers which watered it: And what ſpecies of ſerpent that could be, by whom Eve was ſeduced, whoſe ſpeech even occaſioned no ſurprize, and who not only held converſation with her, but had alſo ſuch inſinuating art, as to lead her into diſobedience by ſpecious pretences. It is certain that neither geography, nor natural hiſtory inform us, of any ſuch trees, of any ſuch rivers, or of any ſuch ſerpents. Neither do we know of any fruit, the eating of which would enlarge the underſtanding, or abaſh it into ſhame or remorſe. And if ſuch a ſerpent did then exiſt, as enjoyed the faculties of

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ſpeech and reaſon, there are none ſuch to be found now; altho' the curſe denounced againſt it, tends neither to deſtroy the ſpecies, nor diveſt it of its ſpeech or rational faculties. The account which Moſes has hitherto given of the creation, is not only rational but probable. But if we take this relation of paradiſe, and the fall of man, in a literal ſenſe, neither probability, nor reaſon will ſupport it. It is beyond any rational ſuppoſition. If on the other hand, we interpret it in an allegorical ſenſe, we find a rational probability run thorough the whole, and a cloſe connection in all the parts of the relation. 1ſt. The word *ſerpent*, as uſed in ſcripture, is not confined to ſignify always an animal; it is uſed frequently to ſignify, either the devil, or theſe wicked ſuggeſtions and diſpoſitions which prompt men to act contrary to the law of God. Thus our Saviour calls the ſcribes and pharaſees *Serpents and a generation of Vipers*; thus Iſaiah ſays, *The Lord with a great ſword would puniſh Leviathan, that great that crooked ſerpent.* 2d. The word ערום Gharum, that quality by which the ſerpent is enabled to ſeduce Eve, and which our tranſlators have made to ſignify ſubtility or cunning, properly ſignifies naked, as may appear in many paſſages, particularly in the immediate preceding verſe, where ערומים Gharumim, ſignifies *They were naked.* 3d. Nakedneſs is the phraſe, conſtantly uſed by Moſes and the prophets, to ſignify the private parts, or the paſſion of concupiſcence. If according to this allegorical meaning, we interpret what Moſes has related, it will turn out thus.---Our firſt parents while in paradiſe, *were naked and were not aſhamed*; † they were forbid to have carnal knowledge of each other, and ſo long as they abſtained from it, they continued in a ſtate of innocence. They were

† Chap. 11. ver. 25.

were happy in knowing no evil, and could form no conception, of what the gratification of their carnal deſires would produce. But when Eve's appetites ſeduced her, and ſhe prevailed on Adam to ſatisfy her deſires, then they certainly attained to a knowledge, of which they had no conception before: but this gratification produced both ſhame and remorſe. They firſt covered theſe parts, the inſtruments of diſobedience (as they were more particularly aſhamed of them) and then hid themſelves. When called to appear before God, they ſaid, they hid themſelves, being aſhamed of being naked. On which they were aſked, who told you, ye were naked? how come ye to know that ye are ſo? have ye done that which ye were forbid to do? On this follows their excuſe. Adam ſaid, he was overperſuaded by his wife; and Eve ſaid, ſhe was ſeduced by her carnal appetites. In this light I look on Eve's converſation with the ſerpent to be a conteſt in her own mind; whether ſhe ſhould comply with what her paſſions excited her to, or refrain from it, in obedience to the command of God. She was in that ſtate of mind which St. Paul thus deſcribes, *There is a law in my members warring againſt the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of ſin, which is in my members.* ‖

As I am perſuaded that Moſes's account of the fall of man is thus allegorical, as ſuch I ſhall conſider it.

When God placed the man and woman together, and endowed them with ſuperior knowledge to his other creatures, he gave them but one prohibitory command: all the other animals were to propogate by copulation, and die. God ſaid, that if they abſtained from this, they ſhould live for ever. To eat of the tree of life, is meant to continue in innocence; and in this ſtate they continued for ſome time. It is ſaid,

‖ Rom. v. ver. 23.

ſaid, *They were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not aſhamed.* But luſt, or the ſerpent, the moſt ſubtile beaſt of the field, (the ſtrongeſt paſſion capable to ſeduce them) began to operate in the mind of Eve. She urged with herſelf, that ſhe was allowed to amuſe herſelf with every other deſire beſides this; that ſhe had been told, if ſhe gratified her deſires in that paſſion, ſhe ſhould die; *we may eat of the fruit of every tree in the garden, but if we eat of the fruit of that tree, which is in the middle of the garden, or, even touch it, we ſhall die.* She was not to entertain the leaſt thought of gratifying that paſſion. But the Serpent ſaid, *Ye ſhall not ſurely die, and when the woman ſaw that the tree was good for food, and pleaſant to the eye, and a tree to be deſired to make one wiſe; She took of the fruit thereof, and did eat; and gave it to her husband and he did eat;* that is, when ſhe perceived in herſelf, that violent deſire to gratify her luſt, which promiſed her ſome great unknown pleaſure, and when this expectation was confirmed, by the ſeeming extaſy, ſhe obſerved in other animals in copulation, who nevertheleſs ſtill remained alive; luſt got the better of her obedience, and ſhe perſuaded her huſband to gratify her; who was too weak to reſiſt her ſollicitations. It was no ſooner over, than they repented, and were aſhamed of what they had done; they covered theſe parts, the means of diſobedience; they made themſelves aprons of fig leaves to conceal them. Next follows an account of their puniſhment; they became ſubject to death. As the obeying their luſt brought on population, death became neceſſary. The paſſion which provoked them to diſobedience, is curſed above all other paſſions: and luſt ſhews itſelf in the human race, in viler ſhapes, than in any other animals. To the woman he ſaid. *I will greatly multiply thy ſorrows*

and

and thy conception: in ſorrow ſhalt thou bring forth children; thy deſire ſhall be to thy husband, and he ſhall rule over thee. And to Adam he ſaid, *Becauſe thou haſt hearkened to the voice of thy wife, and haſt eaten of the tree, of which I commanded, thou ſhouldeſt not eat; curſed is the ground for thy ſake; in ſorrow ſhall thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns and thiſtles ſhall it bring forth to thee: Thou ſhalt eat of the herb of the field; in the ſweat of thy face ſhalt thou eat bread, until thou return to the ground; for out of it waſt thou taken; duſt thou art, and unto duſt ſhalt thou return.*

The puniſhment here inflicted is altogether relative to the crime committed; the pains of labour are more violent in woman than in any other female; and whereas all other animals are provided with food, without any forced toil or labour to themſelves, man alone muſt labour for his, in the ſweat of his brows; and to encreaſe that labour, the earth is curſed on his account; and inſtead of yielding freely what was proper for his nouriſhment, noxious herbs, or ſuch as he could not feed on, ſhould grow up, along with others. When Adam was made acquainted with his puniſhment, he, for the firſt time, became ſenſible of ſome of the diſagreeable paſſions, the conſequence of it; he looked on his wife as the cauſe of it, and ſeems to have given her a name in anger; he called her, חוה *Hava*, a word derived from *Havan*, which ſignifies the act of copulation; becauſe (as Moſes modeſtly expreſſes it,) ſhe was the mother of all living; and to that particular part of her, which ſhe hid, he gave the name פתח *petah*, which in Hebrew is the root ſignifying to ſeduce or over perſuade. They then loſt that ſerenity of mind, that innocence which they had before; and in its place, remorſe and ſhame took poſſeſſion of their thoughts, and was an impenetrable bar to their enjoying it again. Moſes re-

repreſents this, by a Cherubim placed with a flaming ſword, to hinder them from re-entering Paradiſe and eating of the tree of life, or returning again into the ſtate of innocence. They were baniſhed from the ſtate of innocence. Analagous to this expreſſion of the tree of knowledge is that phraſe, conſtantly uſed by Moſes; for wherever copulation is meant, it is expreſſed by a *man knowing a woman.* In the firſt verſe of the next chapter, Moſes ſays, *Adam knew his wife, and ſhe conceived and bare Cain,* the production of their firſt tranſgreſſion.

By population, was introduced emulation, from whence all the immoral vices. Pride, ambition, malice, envy or hatred could not exiſt, while man was alone; he had no one elſe to compare himſelf to, and of conſequence no opportunity to excite theſe paſſions; but when by population the ſpecies multiplied, each individual reflected on his own ſtate, by comparing himſelf to his fellow. Self-love threw him out of his innocence. He was directed more by his paſſions than by his duty to God; this made him hate thoſe he envied; envy produced malice, and malice produced revenge, revenge was followed by ſhame, and ſhame by hypocriſy. Adam ſoon ſaw the conſequence of his crime; his eldeſt ſon killed his brother, and uſed hypocriſy to conceal the murder.

I believe circumciſion, and the ſacrificing whatever opened the matrix, was afterwards inſtituted among the Hebrews, in commemoration of, and as ſome atonement for the firſt tranſgreſſion of Adam and Eve, (a religious ceremony, for which I can aſſign no other reaſon or beginning.) Eve had alledged, the Serpent had tempted her; or the deſire ſhe was endowed with by nature, was the cauſe of her diſobedience: ſhe was unable to reſiſt it. To this ſhe is anſwered by God, as ſpeaking to the ſerpent or luſt, *I will put enmity between thee and the*

the woman, and between thy ſeed and her ſeed, it ſhall bruiſe thy head, and thou ſhalt bruiſe his heel. This ſeems to allude to ſome future deſcendant of the woman, whom luſt ſhould not be able to corrupt; by whoſe example, others ſhould be debarr'd from alledging their ſtrength of paſſion, as an excuſe for not conforming to the duty required.

There ſeems one objection to this ſuppoſition of the fall of man, viz. chap. 1. ver. 27, 28. *He created them male and female, he bleſſed them and ſaid, be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth and ſubdue it*; therefore this order muſt be previous to their fall, yea even to their being put into the the garden of Eden. But if this proves any thing, it proves too much; it proves that man was created male and female, before Eve; the cauſe and manner of whoſe creation, we are told of in the ſecond chapter; and by which it appears, there was ſome conſiderable ſpace of time, between the creation of Adam and Eve. If the antecedence of place, proves the antecedence of time; man and woman were created before Eve. If Eve was the woman firſt created, then the ſecond chapter is only an explanation of what was related in the firſt. If it is an explanation only, we muſt think, that when God ſays, it is not meet for man to be alone, that the woman was not then created. He ſays I will make a help meet for him; and he brought to Adam every beaſt of the field, and every fowl of the air, to view them, and to give them names; and whatever names he gave them, they were called by; and after examining all the creatures brought before him, there was not found a companion meet for man: *So God cauſed a deep ſleep to fall upon him, &c.* By this it appears that the man was created ſome conſiderable time before the woman; that after his creation, it was enquired into by examination, whether any of the animals already

already created, was a fit companion for him; that after viewing them, and conſidering their different diſpoſitions, he gave them names according to theſe diſpoſitions; but as none of them was found a proper companion for him, God proceeded to a new creation of one, who ſhould be a proper companion: and to make him look on this newly created being, as one he ſhould have a greater regard to than others, he made her out of part of himſelf; *he cauſed a deep ſleep to fall on him, and took one of his ribs, &c.* From the creation of the woman, the hiſtory is uniformly continued thro' the ſecond, third, and fourth chapters. The third gives an account of their tranſgreſſion and baniſhment from Paradiſe; and the fourth chapter begins thus, (as in the old tranſlation,) *Afterwards the man knew Eve his wife, who conceived and bare Cain.* This cannot well admit of any other ſenſe, than, that after what was related in the preceding chapter, Adam had carnal knowledge of his wife; upon which ſhe conceived and bare Cain. So I ſee no reaſon to think, that the order to increaſe and multiply was given, till after the fall. As population encreaſed, Adam ſaw his children degenerate from that purity of morals he had inſtructed them in; he ſaw one of his ſons murder another; we are told, he was one hundred and thirty years old when that happened; his deſcendants by this time, muſt have been conſiderably multiplied; and the next ſon after this murder was Seth. It is probable that this murder, and the degeneracy he obſerved in his other children, made him more particularly careful in the inſtruction he gave Seth, his new born ſon. It is ſaid he begat him in his own likeneſs, after his own image. Adam, originally inſtructed by the Almighty in his moral obligations, took more particular care to inculcate theſe precepts into the mind of Seth, of which he found his other children de-

deficient: and this ſon is ſaid more particularly to have obeyed him, both in his own behaviour, and the precepts he delivered to his family. It may ſeem ſtrange that mankind ſhould ſo quickly apoſtatiſe and forſake the worſhip of the true God, the inviſible creator of all things; and in his ſtead to worſhip theſe viſible objects the ſun, moon, and ſtars, while Adam, originally inſtructed by God himſelf, remained with them for above nine hundred years, and was certainly as willing, as able to inſtruct his children in the proper object of worſhip. But it muſt be obſerved that this apoſtacy began and prevailed only among the children of Cain, who had no opportunity of being inſtructed by Adam. Mankind were divided into two ſects, called *the ſons of God* (thoſe who kept with and followed the precepts of Adam,) *and the ſons of men*, or the poſterity of Cain, who had no communication with the others. When Cain, for the murder of his brother, was condemned to be a fugitive and vagabond on the earth, horror and dread took ſuch poſſeſſion of his mind, that he was afraid leſt every one who met him ſhould kill him. But God who reſerves vengeance to himſelf, denounced a curſe againſt any one, who ſhould kill Cain, and ſet a mark on him, that he might be known by. What that mark was, we are not told: it is probable, that it was that expreſſion in the countenance and behaviour, which deſpair and a preying conſcious guilt generally produces. He therefore fled from his father and all ſociety, to a diſtant part of the earth, that he might not be ſeen of men: He went and dwelt in the land of Nod. His children, thus diſunited from the reſt of men, could receive no inſtruction from Adam; and, it is probable, Cain would not inſtruct them in the knowledge and precepts of that offended God, who had thus marked him out as a criminal, leſt they alſo

ſhould

ſhould upbraid him; and be tempted to inflict that puniſhment, to ſhun which, he had fled from all ſociety. His poſterity, deprived of all information of the true God, formed their ideas from their ſenſes; and the moſt glorious objects their ſenſes preſented to them, were thoſe of the heavens, the ſun, moon and ſtars, them therefore they worſhipped. To form a juſt idea of an inviſible, omnipotent and omniſcient God, merely from the ſtrength of natural reaſon and reflection, requires the penetration of a philoſopher, and few have attained to that knowledge; I take this to have been the origin of Zabaiſm among Cain's poſterity. But it ſeems they did not ſtop at this, for even ſo early as the third generation, great men aſſumed divine honours to themſelves; for in the laſt verſe of the fourth chapter, it is ſaid, *Then began men to call themſelves by the name of the Lord.* The children of Adam, being thus divided into two different ſects, are diſtinguiſhed by the hiſtorian, under the appellations of *the ſons of God and the ſons of men.*

Theſe two ſects of people, kept themſelves, for ſome time, diſtinct from one another; but at laſt, the ſame temptation, which induced Adam to commit his firſt tranſgreſſion, induced them to mix and become one people. *The ſons of God ſaw the daughters of men, that they were fair; they took them wives of all that they choſe. Then God's anger aroſe againſt all mankind; and the Lord ſaid, my ſpirit ſhall not always ſtrive with man; that the wickedneſs of man was great on the earth; that every imagination of his heart was only evil continually; for the whole earth was corrupt, and filled with violence; for that all fleſh had corrupted their ways; nor was there any man found on the earth righteous, beſides Noah.* What next follows in the hiſtory, is that remarkable judgment inflicted, for this their univerſal defection.

CHAPTER V.

Of the FLOOD.

THE account which Moſes has given, that a flood of waters, deſtroyed mankind, is confirmed by the teſtimony of the Egyptians, Chaldeans, Indians and Chineſe; ſo that no doubt remains of ſuch a circumſtance having happened. But how to account for its natural cauſe, or for the quantity of water that could effect it, has been long the ſubject of conjecture; and many different hypotheſes have been formed, and many ſuppoſitions made, to render it poſſible. Some have imagined that it was done by the approach of a comet, in the atmoſphere of whoſe tail, the earth was involved; Others, that what formed the land before the flood, was only a cruſt, which broke and ſunk down at the flood, unto the abyſs below; Others have thought, that the centre of gravity muſt have ſucceſſively changed in the earth, and ſo have occaſioned a ſucceſſive inundation over the different parts of it: but each of theſe ſuppoſitions is liable to unanſwerable objections. There is one circumſtance (hitherto not adverted to) which, without any additional water, or any great alteration in nature, would neceſſarily overwhelm that part of the world, which, in all probability, could only be inhabited before the flood. It has been, and I think with reaſon ſuppoſed, that before the flood, the axis of the earth was perpendicular to the plane of the Ecliptic; by which diſpoſition, it would conſtantly move in one direction, during its annual courſe round the ſun. The earth was at firſt deſigned for the habitation of two people only, who would find ſufficient ſupport from the natural productions

ductions of vegetables, without any labour of their own; as every herb, and the fruit of every tree was food for them. If this was the ſtate of the antedeluvian world, there could be no variety of ſeaſons, of ſummer and winter, ſeed time and harveſt, heat and cold, as was inſtituted after the flood. The earth muſt have enjoyed a continual equinox, the ſun muſt have been always vertical to one line on the globe; a ſameneſs muſt have reigned in every part of it throughout the year, according to its latitude: and the habitable world would have been confined to that ſpace, which is within twenty or thirty degrees of that line, to whch the ſun was vertical, or (what may be now called) the ſpace between the tropics. As the natural ſtate of man was to be naked, and the uſe of cloaths was invented to defend them from the rigour of the cold, it may be reaſonably ſuppoſed, that mankind would continue, while they could, in that climate, which did not require the uſe of them. It was only immediately before the flood, when mankind, too confined for want of room in the warm climate they were accuſtomed to, were obliged to take up with a colder one, that Jabal invented tents to defend them from the weather. Had mankind before the flood, been diſperſed into cold climates, the uſe of tents would have occurr'd, long before Jabal's time.

If the habitable world was confined to within five and twenty, or thirty degrees of the equator; and the intent of the flood was to deſtroy mankind; the overflowing that part of the earth only, would have executed that purpoſe, and this would certainly come to paſs, by a very ſmall alteration in the courſe of nature.

At the creation, the different elements aſſumed each its particular place, as gravity, attraction or centrifugal force affected it: and the diſpoſition of

the whole, would be in proportion to that force, which each of theſe powers exerciſed, in conjunction with the others. But if afterwards, the force of either of theſe three powers, were either encreaſed or diminiſhed, while the others continued unalter'd, the former effect of their united force muſt be alſo altered; and the earth would aſſume a ſhape, agreeable to the united force of theſe powers thus altered. The earth turns round its axis in twenty four hours, and I believe it did the ſame before the flood; if at the flood, the Almighty Power ſhould make this circumvolution to be performed in leſs time, ſuppoſe in twenty three hours, the centrifugal force would be encreaſed in proportion; and every element, capable of being affected by it, would fly off further from the centre, towards the circumference of the circle; and, inſtead of a globular form, the earth would aſſume a ſpheroidal, or turnep ſhape; the waters near the poles would ſink, and flow towards the Equator: this muſt occaſion the waters to riſe, and cover all the lands near the Equator, the then only inhabited part of the world. As the effect of centrifugal power is to counteract gravitation, all the lighter parts, ſuch as the air or firmament, would be expanded, and fly off to a greater diſtance from the earth; and thereby become incapable of ſuſpending the evaporated moiſture: the waters contained in the clouds muſt then fall to the earth; or it wouuld rain, while any watry particles were left in the firmament. As the ſame cauſe, which gathered the waters together near the Equator, was what occaſioned it to rain, ſo theſe two effects muſt be produced at the ſame time; and we are told by Moſes, that they happened on the ſame day: he ſays, *On the ſeventeenth day of the ſecond month, the ſame day, were all the fountains of the great deep broke up, and the windows of heaven were opened*; that

that the waters continued to encreaſe, and the rain continued to pour down, until the waters roſe to fifteen cubits above the land, and the tops of all the hills were covered; ſo that every thing periſhed in the flood, beſides what was preſerved in the ark. Upon this encreaſed motion of the earth round its axis, the flux of waters from the poles towards the Equator, would, like the torrent of a river, carry every thing moveable along with it. But when this additional velocity was ſtopped, by the time of the circumvolution being again prolonged to its former length, the additional centrifugal force would ceaſe, and the waters would return towards the poles with the ſame velocity, as they had formerly flowed towards the Equator; and in like manner carry along with them, whatever was moveable by the torrent. But it cannot be ſuppoſed that the earth, ſand, and marine ſubſtances, thus drove on during the encreaſe of the flood, would, on its decreaſe, be carried back and depoſited, exactly in the ſame places from whence they were taken. Rocks, and ſuch parts of the earth, whoſe adheſion was too ſtrong to allow them to be forced and carried off, would, both on the flux and reflux of the waters, ſtop theſe moveable ſubſtances, which muſt there be collected, would riſe into heaps and form mountains, where none were before; and this is verified by the quantities of ſhells and other marine ſubſtances, found in different ſtrata in mountains and other places, to which the ſea ſeems now, never to have had any acceſs. As this convulſion, which nature ſuffered at the flood, muſt have, in a great meaſure, changed the ſhape and ſurface of the land; it ſeems idle to aſſign ſituations to places before the flood, by any ſimilitude to places now on the earth.

When Adam and Eve were created, they were put together to try their obedience, and were endowed

dowed with ſuch *Stamina vitæ*, as, had they obſerved the order given them, might have preſerved life, until the end of time; and even after their tranſgreſſion, when population made death neceſſary, we find their children poſſeſſed of ſuch ſtrong ſtamina, as prolonged their lives to near a thouſand years.

Some people have from thence taken upon them to make a calculation, of what number mankind might have conſiſted, at the time of the flood; they have conſidered their longævity as ſo many additional numbers to mankind; they ſuppoſed none died, but by the natural death of old age, and that procreation began as early, and was carried on as quickly, as at preſent. On theſe ſuppoſitions they have made their numbers to amount to above a hundred thouſand millions, a number of which the preſent world could not ſupport the fiftieth part, altho' the curſe of ſterility was taken off. But to make a probable conjecture of their numbers, the following conſiderations muſt be attended to; Animal life, like a tide, is either conſtantly advancing, by certain periods, to its perfection (its Ακμη) or deſcending by ſimilar ſtages to its diſſolution. It never ſtands ſtill, or is the ſame to-day, as it was yeſterday. And theſe different periods or ſtages, are always at certain ſtated times, or diſtances from each other, in proportion to the natural length of life. Puberty, or that time of life, at which animals begin to propogate their ſpecies, is always in proportion to the length which nature hath aſſigned them, before old age puts an end to life: The longer the natural life of an animal is, the later it is, before the age of puberty begins; and the ſhorter their natural life is, the ſooner doth it ſhow itſelf. It is that period, when the arteries are extended, nearly, to the utmoſt length, to which the force of the heart can ſtretch them. And before this

period

period, the animal muſt encreaſe in ſtature continually. With the preſent ſtate of mankind, the common extent of life is ſeventy or eighty years, and their age of puberty is about ſeventeen or eighteen. The natural life of an antedeluvian extended to above nine hundred years, and the different periods of their lives muſt have been at a proportionate diſtance from each other; and we accordingly find none of them to have had children before the age of ſixty-five; and but two, who had them ſo early. If this was their age of puberty, they muſt have increaſed in ſtature and bulk, until that age.

Moſes tells us, that in thoſe days there were giants on the earth; and if nature obſerved the ſame rule at that time, which ſhe doth now, none but giants (with reſpect to us,) could have been on the earth in thoſe days. And for the ſame reaſon, the time which mothers took to ſuckle their children, muſt have been longer than is now neceſſary; ſo that neither could women have connubial commerce ſo ſoon after delivery, nor could theſe children ſo ſoon arrive at the age of puberty as they do now, and of conſequence procreation could not be carried on ſo quickly, as it is at preſent. Beſides theſe natural cauſes, which made population ſlower, there was another, which would contribute more than any thing elſe, to deſtroy mankind, and leſſen their numbers, viz. that univerſal violence with which the earth is ſaid to have been filled, and corrupted. By violence I can underſtand nothing elſe, but univerſal rapine, wars and bloodſhed. When the morals of men are ſo corrupted, as to throw off all regard to juſtice, and to gratify their deſires by whatever means they can attain to the end they propoſe; the different intereſts and paſſions of men will ſet them at war one with another. And they had then an extraordinary temptation to do it. The ſize of man was large,

and would require a proportionate quantity of nouriſhment to ſupport it; the earth was curſed, and would not produce its fruits without great labour, and the habitable part was confined to little more, than what is now between the tropics. During the infancy of the world, that warm climate was ſufficient to ſupport its inhabitants, without tempting them to plunder one another; but when mankind had increaſed, and filled up that ſpace, their numbers would oblige them, either to go to new ſettlements, or to rob their neighbours of their poſſeſſions. Any new ſettlement they could fix on, would be in a colder, worſe, and more barren climate than where they came from; there their labour would be greater; the decreaſe of the heat of the ſun, would make the fruit of their labour come ſlower to perfection, and the ſucceſs of it would be rendered much more precarious. Jabal, the inventor of tents, ſeems to have lived on the borders of theſe inhoſpitable climates; for the vegetable productions of the earth were not what he cultivated. *He was the father of thoſe who keep cattle*, or whoſe livelihood was by flocks. Under theſe circumſtances men were tempted to invade the poſſeſſions of others. Nothing but ſuperior force would oblige a man to give up his poſſeſſions to a robber: this produced that univerſal violence, which men committed, one againſt another; and the moſt powerful and ſucceſsful invaders, would be (as in our days) accounted the greateſt men: and Moſes tells us, that there were then *men of great renown on the Earth.* Theſe conſiderations oblige me to think, that at the time of the flood, the earth could not be ſo populous, as theſe calculators have ſuppoſed.

After the flood, the axis of the earth was made, as it now does, to incline three and twenty degrees on the plane of the Ecliptic, ſo that the ſun, inſtead

of

of being always vertical to one line on the globe, traverſed, during the year, ſeven and forty degrees on the meridian. By this the habitable world was enlarged; by this, the curſe of ſterility was taken off (as the different parts of the earth was fertilized by the ſucceſſive return of the heat of the ſun) and by this, the year was divided into different ſeaſons. God ſaid, *While the earth remaineth, ſeed time and harveſt, cold and heat, ſummer and winter, and day and night ſhall not ceaſe.* At the ſame time that the habitable world is enlarged, the curſe of ſterility taken off, and the age of man ſhortened to a hundred and twenty years, Noah is ordered to multiply and repleniſh the earth. The duty required of man, by the ſecond covenant made with Noah, is not ſuch as was formerly required of Adam; For God ſaid, *That the imaginations of man's heart were evil from his youth;* therefore the chief law given, was to abſtain from violence and ſhedding man's blood (that crime for which the former inhabitants of the earth had been deſtroyed) He ſaid, *At the hand of every man, at the hand of every man's brother, will I require the life of man;* ſo that no affinity might protect a murderer. This is the firſt command given to man after the flood; and this makes the firſt law of ſociety.

As the natural length of human life was now ſhortened, ſo the age of puberty came on earlier in life. *Sem* was a hundred years old when he begat *Arphaxad*, two years after the flood; but *Arphaxad* was only five and thirty years old, when he begat *Salah*.

It has been queſtioned, whether the ark, (whoſe dimenſions are ſpecified by Moſes) was capable to contain all the animals ſaid to be preſerved in it, along with their food and water. Celſus ridicules it, as too ſmall; but it ought to be adverted to, that a cubit, the meaſure by which it was built, is a relative meaſure; it was according to the ſize of what men then were,

when the conſtruction of it was ordered; and altho' the ſize of men, by which Noah took the cubit, was larger than it is now, from their longevity, yet we have no reaſon to ſuppoſe that the ſize of other animals, which were preſerved in it, was any larger then, than it is now.

What particular mountain the ark reſted on, is not material to know; whether it was a high or a low one. Upon the receſſion of the waters, Noah came down from the ark and ſacrificed, in acknowledgement of the mercies ſhewn him in his preſervation. In proportion to their increaſe, they went to ſeek for new habitations, until they came to a fertile plain, the land of Shinar (ſuppoſed to be Meſopotamia) Hitherto they had been few in number, and were directed and governed by Noah and his ſons; but now being increaſed to ſuch a multitude, as to make it impoſſible for thoſe only, to judge and direct them, they propoſed to eſtabliſh ſome political government; which, without applying to their fathers, they imagined, might ſo unite them, as that nothing could deſtroy their concord and government. This is expreſſed by Moſes, by *their building a city and tower, whoſe top ſhould reach to Heaven, to make themſelves a name, when they ſhould be ſcattered abroad on the face of the earth;* but that God, who would have men governed by the laws of natural duty only, was diſpleaſed at this. Our tranſlation ſays, that he confounded their language, ſo that they could not underſtand one the other, on which, the name of the place was called *Babel*, or confuſion.

What is here tranſlated *language*, properly ſignifies *lip*; and is as applicable to the expreſſion of ſentiment, as to the ſound of words. Difference in opinion would hinder them as effectually, from coming to any final reſolution, as their not underſtanding what one another ſaid. I do not think a miracle is ever employed,

ployed, when the ſame effect may be brought about by natural cauſes : an obſtinate difference in ſentiment, would as effectually break off their conſultations, and fruſtrate their intentions, as a confuſion of languages; beſides it is evident, no ſuch new formation of languages ever happened: for the old Eaſtern languages, have, all of them, the Hebrew for their root; and the variety, which afterwards enſued, may be ſuppoſed, at firſt only different dialects, which, in proceſs of time, degenerated into different languages. Had their deſign been, by this high tower, to protect themſelves from another flood, they never would have built it on a plain; nor was that their reaſon, for they ſaid, they did it, leſt they ſhould be ſcattered abroad on the earth.

In conſequence of this diſagreement, they who diſſented from this propoſal, ſeparated themſelves from the others, to find out new habitations; and they who agreed to the propoſal, ſtaid where they were, and formed a certain model of government. The chief of theſe was Nimrod, who put himſelf at their head, and the firſt government we have any account of, is ſaid to be in theſe plains of Shinar, over which Nimrod reigned. What happened afterwards in the Moſaic account of the world, is confined to Abraham and his progeny; ſo I ſhall not follow it further.---I have thus far given my ſentiments on the Moſaic account of the creation; and ſhould now go on to enquire what was the duty originally required by the Almighty, of man to perform, from the natural knowledge he had endowed his mind with. But before I do this, I ſhall enquire ſomewhat into the nature of the human mind, of which I cannot help entertaining thoughts, different from what are commonly received among men.

CHAP.

CHAPTER VI.

Of the SOUL.

IT is an opinion, almoſt univerſally received, that man conſiſts of two diſtinct parts, quite different from each other, viz. the ſoul and the body; that the ſoul is that part which directs, and the body the inſtrument acted upon, and put in motion by the ſoul; that one is periſhable, and the other not; that death is only a ſeparation of the ſoul, or directing part, from the body or inſtrument employed; that the ſoul is immortal, but the body periſhable. This hypotheſis, altho' univerſally received, I think liable to many objections. It ſeems to me contrary to *reaſon*, to *obſervation* and to *revealed religion*. The vanity of ſchoolmen hath made them determine this by the following ſyllogiſm—Mere matter cannot think; the body is mere matter, therefore the body cannot think: Man thinks, therefore he muſt be endowed with ſomething beſides his body, to enable him to think, and that ſomething elſe, or ſoul, which enables him to think, muſt be immaterial. Spirits cannot decay, therefore the ſpirit, or ſoul of man, muſt be immortal. I allow that matter, abſtracted from every other quality beſides ſubſtance and extention, cannot think; it would be as the earth was before nature was inſtituted; but we know of no ſuch matter. The organs of both animals and vegetables are ſo modified, as to ſeparate juices, each proper to itſelf, after its kind. The ſame earth, moiſtened by rain, will produce vegetables different from, yea oppoſite to one another: and the ſame food given to different animals, will equally nouriſh them. It is therefore

therefore the different modification of the nouriſhment, by the organs which receive it, that conſtitutes this difference in their natures and qualities. But to follow the ſchoolmen in their own way: I muſt aſk how comes it, that my body is put in motion by my ſoul? They anſwer, it is by the influx of the animal ſpirits into the different muſcles. If theſe ſpirits are matter, they cannot be impelled by what is immaterial. Mere matter muſt be diſlodged and put in motion, by other matter preſſing on it, to compel it to leave its place. A ſpirit is immaterial, and cannot preſs upon it, or oblige it to change its place. If my will were a ſpirit, it therefore could not act on my body, ſo as to put it in motion; but my body is put in motion by my will, therefore my will is not a ſpirit. If my will or thinking faculty be not a ſpirit, it muſt be a circumſtance attending my body, and muſt be periſhable with it, whenever it ceaſes to perform the functions of life. I obſerve a gradation in all organic bodies, from the meaneſt plant to the wiſeſt man: the ſenſible plant will ſhrink when hurt; ſome animals do little more. The chief difference between a vegetable and an animal is this; the one is ſtationary or permanent; the roots, by which it receives nouriſhment, are fixed and without; in the place where the ſeed falls, there muſt it remain, for there it muſt be nouriſhed. Animals are locomotive; the roots by which they are nouriſhed are within them; they muſt ſearch for, and chooſe their food; they are unconnected altogether with the place where they get their nouriſhment; they receive it by the mouth and prepare it in the ſtomach, and their guts act the part of roots; they ſeparate what is proper for nouriſhment, and diſcharge what is not. I know of no animal but what has a will, a ſenſe of pleaſure and pain: many of them have an evident judgment.

They

They compare ideas together, and fix upon that reſolution, moſt probable to bring about the end propoſed. The cunning of the fox, the caution of the hare, the watchfulneſs and fidelity of the dog, the care of mothers to defend their young, their attacking other animals, from whom they dread offence to their young, ſhow their judgment, which is only a leſs degree of the human. Have all animals immortal ſouls? They have all a mind or faculty of thinking and judging, and by the ſchoolmen's account muſt have an equal right to an immortal director, as the human ſpecies; but they don't alledge this. It is the vanity of men only, which makes them deny what they cannot comprehend. They cannot comprehend how matter ſhould think; they therefore deny it the power of thought, and have joined a ſpirit or immortal part to the body, to perform thought, and inforce it to action. The queſtion is not made clearer by this ſuppoſition, nor the ſolution nearer; it only makes way for another queſtion; how can objects, applied to the ſenſes, affect this ſpirit? The figure of an object painted on the retina, or the effluvia ſtriking the noſtrils, can make no impreſſion on a ſpirit; for this is altogether done by the application of matter to matter. It all comes to this queſtion, ſhow, how matter can either affect, or be affected by, what is immaterial; but this they have never attempted to do. We have numberleſs inſtances of men, who, from being endowed with the moſt profound knowledge, penetration and learning, ſo as to ſeem, even to ſurpaſs human capacity, have been afterwards ſo altered by diſeaſes, as to become below brutes in their mental faculties, altho' at the ſame time they continue poſſeſſed of their natural ones in great ſtrength and vigour. What has become of their ſoul at this time? Where doth it ſhow its

exiſtence

exiſtence? If an alteration in the body is capable to make this alteration in the ſoul; for the ſame reaſon, a diſſolution of the body muſt alſo make a diſſolution of the ſoul. There are many operations in nature which we cannot account for. The magnet, Electricity, and many other things, ſhow us effects we cannot account for: are we therefore to deny them? or ſay they are directed by a ſpirit? It ſeems to me, that to ſay *matter*, which ever way modified, cannot think, is to ſet bounds to Almighty Power. It is noneſenſe; every thing is poſſible to him, which does not imply a contradiction. To account for the modification of matter in the growth of vegetables, or thought in brute animals, is as far above the comprehenſion of the human mind, as to account for thought and will in themſelves. It is certain, that judgment is in a greater degree of perfection in the human race, than in any other animal; but that this ſuperior perfection muſt be owing to the attendance of an extroardinary being, as a ſoul or immortal ſpirit, is not neceſſary.

Secondly. I ſhall enquire what information, obſervation gives us on this head. It would have conduced a great deal to illuſtrate this, had it been determined, what is the nature of this immortal ſpirit, this incomprehenſible being, which attends and directs the body. For want of ſuch information, I am obliged to underſtand a ſpirit in this light: It is an intellectual being, without ſubſtance or parts; who enjoys at all times, an uninterrupted power of thought, without being affected by matter, ſo as to add to, or take from its intellectual power of judging. Thought in it is an intrinſic knowledge, a quality which retains its force without fatigue or decay; experience may make it wiſer, but never weaker; for whatever is capable of becoming weaker in its faculties,

may

may at laſt loſe them altogether, and become non-exiſtent or mortal: and a ſpirit without its intellectual faculties is nothing. Let us compare this idea of a ſpirit with the human mind. There are none ſo little converſant with human nature, as not to have obſerved, that as children advance in years, they advance in judgment; their firſt ideas are thoſe of pleaſure and pain; next is joined memory, and afterwards reaſon; whence proceeds judgment, compoſed both of memory and reaſon: Alſo, that when the body has attained to its utmoſt growth and ſtrength, the mind is then in its utmoſt vigour; that when old age has wore out the body, ſo doth the mind loſe its faculties, and become fooliſh. But a knowledge of the animal oeconomy has enabled us to carry our obſervations further, and with more certainty; it has pointed out the particular organs of the body, whence proceed life and thought. Theſe are found to be the brain, as divided into two parts; from them are ſent forth the nerves, theſe inſtruments thro' which, all ſenſation and action are communicated to the judgment by the ſenſes, and through them, by the will, to the muſcles of the body.

If we examine man phyſically, and begin with his conception, and follow him thro' the different ſtages, from the origin of life to natural death; it will appear in the following light: When the *Semina maris et feminæ* are at the ſame time thrown into the womb, and conception follows, the embrio is nouriſhed in a vegetative way, by receiving its nouriſhment, by an external root from the mother, by veſſels which carry and return the blood from her to the child: by theſe, the parts of the child form, and enlarge themſelves to that ſtate which enables it to execute its own functions. The firſt action of animal life is, from the cerebellum to the heart; this brings on a contraction of the heart: the mechaniſm

of

of which, occaſions an alternate contraction and dilatation in it; and the *foetus* does then become an animal. In animals the brain is the organ, or reſidence of life and thought; it is divided into two parts, viz. the cerebellum and cerebrum; the cerebellum is ſolid, its function is to be in continual action; from it are ſent theſe nerves, which go to the parts which are the immediate inſtruments of life, whoſe action cannot ceaſe, but death muſt enſue. The cerebrum is not ſolid; it has ſeveral cavities; it is the ſeat of thought, memory, judgment and ſenſation; it cannot bear continual action; it is capable of being tired, and becomes unable to continue its functions; its operations muſt be ſometimes ſuſpended, and allowed reſt to recover its ſtrength: circumſtances quite incompatible with the idea of ſpirit.

When by circulation and nouriſhment, the cerebrum is ſo enlarged, as to be able to execute any of its functions, the *foetus* ſhows the beginning of thought by voluntary motion. This period is commonly called the mother's being quick. It continues after this to be nouriſhed in the womb, until its parts are ſufficiently formed, and the mind endowed with ſuch inſtinctive faculties, as to enable it to live without the root, or immediate communication with the mother: the connexion is then diſſolved, it is thruſt out from the mother, and demands nouriſhment by the mouth. The mind is then in in that degree of ſtrength, which ſhows its deſires to what pleaſes it, and uneaſineſs to what offends it.

As it is the action of the cerebellum which gives motion to the heart; ſo long as the ſtrength of the heart, in impelling the blood thro' the arteries, is ſuperior to their reſiſtance, ſo long will theſe veſſels continue to extend themſelves further; ſo long will the body continue to enlarge and expand; ſo long

will the cerebrum continue to enlarge and dilate itſelf; and ſo long will the ſtrength of the mind continue to encreaſe. And as the body acquires its utmoſt degree of ſtrength, ſo doth the mind, its utmoſt degree of vigour. And when the extremities of the arteries, are removed to ſuch a diſtance from the heart, or impelling power, as makes their reſiſtance equal to the impelling force of the heart, the veſſels then cannot be further extended; the body ceaſes to grow longer; theſe two powers become in equilibrio; the veſſels retain their extenſion, the heart cannot force them further; the body has arrived at its full growth, and the judgment to its utmoſt vigour. When by age the veſſels become rigid, ſo that the force of the heart is inſufficient to keep up a ſtrong circulation in the extreme arteries, their elaſtic power makes them contract, the body turns weaker, and the mind leſs vigorous; it becomes diffident and cautious; it conſults experience and obſervation to aſſiſt the judgment. As age advances, judgment and memory gradually decay; the ſenſes are blunted; and as the body approaches, thro' age, to diſſolution; ſo doth the mind ſink into idiotiſm. Thus, in a natural progreſs, doth the body and mind proceed in equal ſtages, from the beginning to their utmoſt ſtrength, and from thence deſcend again to their diſſolution; in which courſe, the ſtrength of the mind depends altogether on the ſtate of the body. But obſervation has carried us ſtill further, it enables us to determine what are the particular organs which are the ſeat of life, and what are thoſe of judgment, independent one of the other: for as life ſeldom goes on, in one equal uninterrupted ſtate, the vital faculties may be entire, and yet the judgment be weakened; as in the caſe of drunkenneſs, madneſs, a ſtroke of an apoplexy, fevers, fractures or contuſions of the ſkull, &c; where the heart con-

continues its ſtrength, but judgment and memory are both loſt. At other times, from a failure in the action of the heart, or executive power of the cerebellum, a perſon faints and dies, while his memory and judgment continue ſtrong to the laſt. While the cerebellum performs its function, the heart will propel the blood through the arteries, and the perſon may continue vigorous, altho', at the ſame time, in a great meaſure deprived of his judgment, from any cauſe which hurts the cerebrum. In like manner, if the cerebrum is in a ſound ſtate, and the cerebellum hurt; the perſon dies in a full enjoyment of his judgment and recollection: So that the faculty of thought depends entirely on the cerebrum, and that of life, on the cerebellum. From obſervation I muſt therefore conclude, that thought and judgment is not a ſpirit diſtinct from, but only a circumſtance attending matter particularly modified; and that the cerebrum is that matter thus modified. Was it otherwiſe, I cannot reconcile to my reaſon, how an apoplexy, a palſy, drunkenneſs, a fracture of the ſkull or old age ſhould deprive a ſpirit of its faculties; for a ſpirit can receive no change in its faculties, by the application of matter. It therefore muſt be inferred from obſervation, that matter may be ſo modified, as to become endued with ſuch intellectual powers, as to make it approach near to ſpirit. The author of the pſalms, in contemplating the Divine Power, in his formation of the human mind, and endowing it with wiſdom, ſuperior to all his other works on earth, breaks out in theſe words, *When I behold the heavens the work of thy hands, what is man that thou art mindful of him? for thou haſt made him a little lower than the Angels* (or ſpirits) *and crowned him with glory and worſhip.* It ſeems from this, that he did not think the human mind was in itſelf a ſpirit, otherwiſe he would not

have called it lower than one; but only that God had made it approach near to one.

Thirdly. The idea of an immortal ſpirit, diſtinct, yet directing and commanding the body, is contrary to that doctrine taught by Jeſus Chriſt and his Apoſtles. The baſis of chriſtianity is an aſſurance, that, at the end of the world, all the human race ſhall be raiſed from the dead to receive judgment, according to their works while on earth; and at that time of appearance, that their bodies, which were mortal, will be changed into immortal ſpirits, Mark, chap. xii. and 24. *Jeſus ſaid unto them, you are deceived, you know not the ſcriptures, neither the power of God, for when men ſhall riſe from the dead, they ſhall be as the Angels* or ſpirits *in heaven.*

The Sadducees deſigned, in an ironical manner, to expoſe the ſuppoſition of a future exiſtence after death, by aſking whoſe wife ſhe ſhould be at the reſurrection, who had ſeven huſbands, while on earth. This queſtion was built on a ſuppoſition, that the reſurrection ſpoke of by Chriſt, was to be a re-exiſtence of the body, when mankind would reaſſume the ſame relation to one another, as they poſſeſſed on earth; but he told them they were miſtaken, and deceived themſelves by this ſuppoſition; that they did not conceive how far the power of God extended; which was ſuch, as would change that body which we poſſeſs here, into a ſpiritual one; and that men at the reſurrection would become ſuch beings, as the angels are, who are incapable of any ſuch relationſhip as huſband and wife.

Hence it follows, that before that ſolemn day of judgment, men are not as angels or ſpirits; and that this immortality doth not commence until that time: they to whom he ſpoke, did not conceive how a reſurrection of the body could be, or future judgment without it: he therefore told them, they knew not the

the power of God. Paul in the 1ſt. Corinth. chap. 15, has attempted to explain this. *How ſay ſome among you, there is no reſurrection of the dead? But if there be no reſurrection of the dead; then is Chriſt not riſen, and they who are aſleep in Chriſt are periſhed; but now Chriſt is riſen from the dead, and is made the firſt fruits of them that ſlept. But ſome will ſay, how are the dead raiſed up? And with what body come they forth: Oh fool! That which thou ſoweſt, is not that body which ſhall be, but God giveth it a body at pleaſure. There are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies; ſo alſo at the reſurrection of the dead, the body that is ſown in corruption, is raiſed in incorruption; it is ſown a natural body, and it is raiſed a ſpiritual body; howbeit that was not firſt made, which is ſpiritual, but that which is natural, and afterwards that which is ſpiritual; and as we have borne the image of the earthly, ſo ſhall we alſo bear the image of the heavenly; and when this corruptible puts on incorruption, and this mortal ſhall have put on immortality, then ſhall be brought to paſs the ſaying that is written,* Death is ſwallowed up in victory. Here is not ſuppoſed a ſeparation, but a change of a body into a ſpirit; for fleſh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. Behold *I ſhow you a myſtery; we ſhall not all ſleep, but we ſhall all be changed; in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, the dead ſhall be raiſed incorruptible:* Or that altho' ſome may be alive when that general day of judgment comes; yet they ſhall all undergo the ſame change, from a corruptible to an incorruptible body, both the living and the dead: and that the ſpiritual body does not commence until this general change at the reſurrection; that it makes no part of the earthly body, or any way joined to it; he ſpeaks of the ſpiritual body, as a future circumſtance to befall us; *So alſo ſhall we bear the image of the heavenly.* If this ſpi-

ritual body exiſted immediately after death, and was then judged, there would be no future, or general judgment, nor any occaſion for it; yet Jeſus Chriſt, in many places, refers the rewards and puniſhments, to this future day of judgment, when every idle word which men ſhall ſpeak, they ſhall give account thereof. Paul ſays, *If there is to be no reſurrection, then they who are dead are periſhed; and if in this life only we have hope in Chriſt, we are of all men the moſt miſerable.* For without a reſurrection, we can have no future expectation, no further exiſtence: We here undergo pain and miſery, without any hope of reward; we become annihilated. But if the mind or intellectual part is not ſuſpended by death, the man cannot be ſaid to be periſhed without a reſurrection. A reſurrection muſt ſignify a re-exiſtence of ſomething, which betwixt death and this period, did not exiſt: And both Chriſt and the Apoſtles have declared plainly, that this re-exiſtence is not to be a bodily one, or compoſed of matter; but one after the manner of Angels or ſpirits. What is it then, that is to commence at the reſurrection? if it is not a body, it muſt be a ſpirit. But if the ſoul or mind is only a circumſtance attending life, then the extent of thought in one animal above another, or in one man above another, muſt be owing, merely to the modification of the brain being more exquiſite in one animal, or in one man, than in another; and upon this ſuppoſition, all the difficulties which ariſe, in accounting for the different degrees of knowledge in different animals, or in different individuals of the ſame ſpecies, and in the ſame individual at different times of life, or affected with different diſeaſes, vaniſh.

It has been believed by mankind ſince the beginning of time, that there will be a future exiſtence, and judgment pronounced after death, and certain-

ly with great juſtice thought ſo. The ſecret horror, with which our minds reproach us, when we do a bad action, (tho' entirely unknown to the world) and the ſecret pleaſure it gives us, when we do a good one, without looking for applauſe or reward from men, convinces me that a time will come for all men to be judged, to be rewarded or puniſhed for what they do here on earth. Before Chriſt, it was believed, that this future judgment was, on death, immediately paſſed on the ſoul or intellectual part, which death did not deſtroy, but only ſeparate from the body: hence came their notions of Elyſian fields, Tartarus and the infernal judges. Chriſtianity does not countenance any ſuch opinion, as a ſeparation of the ſoul from the body at death; it ſays plainly, that the dead will reſt in their graves until the reſurrection, when man is to be converted into a ſpirit, and judged at the laſt day, each according to his works done in this life. Both Pagans and Chriſtians believe in a future ſtate; they differ only as to the manner and time of its commencing. How this change is to be wrought, I cannot conceive; but if I denied it, from my ignorance, I ſhould deny the power of God. It is above my capacity to comprehend what a ſpirit is; I can form no idea of it; yet I am certain ſuch beings may be, for the Almighty power exiſts, the firſt cauſe; and I am alſo certain that his exiſtence cannot be circumſcribed by a body or ſhape. And if ſuch beings as ſpirits do exiſt, I cannot ſee why an infinite gradation of ſuch, may not exiſt alſo, down to the capacity of animated matter. It is impoſſible for a man to comprehend how he himſelf is formed; yet it is evident his origin is a ſecretion by a gland, from the common maſs of blood, produced from food taken into the ſtomach. Solomon and Sir Iſaac Newton were the production of what their fathers eat. This is an operation in nature, beyond

the human mind to conceive; yet he would be accounted a madman who denied it.

On theſe conſiderations I think, that the mind or ſoul dies with the body; and continues in the ſtate of death, until the divine power ſhall, at the laſt general day, or time of judgment, change it into a ſpirit. It is agreeable to reaſon, to obſervation, and to the doctrine taught by Jeſus Chriſt and his apoſtles. It ſeems to me abſurd, to ſuppoſe a general day of judgment at the end of the world, and at the ſame time, a previous judgment immediately on death. One ſet of Chriſtians have endeavoured to remove this abſurdity, by ſuppoſing an intermediate ſtate, betwixt death and judgment; and have aſſigned purgatory, as a place of reſidence for the ſouls of men, before the general day of judgment. But this notion has been broached by men, for lucrative purpoſes; to enrich themſelves and deceive the ignorant; who ought to be told, that the chriſtian doctrine aſſures us, that there is no forgiveneſs without repentance, and that there is no repentance after death; that we then return to the earth from whence we were taken. *Duſt we are and into duſt ſhall we return*, until it pleaſes the Almighty, to raiſe us at the day of judgment, by changing theſe our earthly bodies into ſpiritual ones: for to ſuppoſe rewards and puniſhments are immediately aſſigned to men after death, is to ſuppoſe juſtice to be executed, before judgment is pronounced. There is to be one general day of judgment at the end of the world, when rewards and puniſhments will be aſſigned, according to every man's deſerts; *when every hidden thing will come to light.*

Among men, puniſhment before judgment is unjuſt and abſurd; how much more ſo in that Being, whoſe attributes are juſtice and mercy.

From

From what I have ſaid in another place, I believe there was certainly a time when this world began: and if I may be allowed to ſuppoſe, what was before this period, I ſee no abſurdity in thinking, that many worlds might have preceded ours, in ſucceſſion to one another; whoſe inhabitants might be endowed as we are, who had been tried and judged, as we ſhall be. I cannot think that the all juſt Being would have created any one, either to eternal happineſs or miſery, without ſome previous act of their own, to deſerve theſe rewards or puniſhments. We believe in good and bad ſpirits, angels and devils. I am apt to believe that theſe are Beings, to whom, on ſome former trial, theſe rewards and puniſhments have been adjudged; and that, at the day of judgment, we ſhall be converted into ſuch, according to our merits here on earth.

The ſuppoſition of the ſouls being diſtinct from the body, and to exiſt after death, involves a Chriſtian in an hypotheſis he is not aware of; which is, that at the reſurrection, man will have two ſouls; for by the information of Chriſt and his apoſtles, he muſt believe, that, at the reſurrection, this earthly corruptible body will be changed into a ſpiritual one, *for corruption cannot inherit incorruption*; that at the day of judgment, *the ſea and the grave will deliver up their dead*, in order to undergo this change; and that our not conceiving how this can be done, our Saviour tells us, is owing entirely to our ignorance of the power of God. St. Paul, in explaining this, tells us, *that the body which dies, or is ſown a corruptible body, ſhall, at the reſurrection, be changed into an incorruptible, or ſpiritual one.* As thoſe paſſages ſhow this ſpiritual change muſt happen at the reſurrection; the other ſpirit or ſoul, which ſuffered no change on death, muſt make a ſecond ſoul at the reſurrection.

I ſhall

I ſhall conclude this chapter, with obſerving, that as there is to be a reſurrection of the juſt and unjuſt, when all men ſhall be judged, each according to the deeds done in the body; it no way concerns our ſalvation or condemnation, whether we believe, that the ſoul is immortal, and only ſeparated from the body by death; or that the human mind dies with the body, which, at the reſurrection, is to re-exiſt, and put on the nature of a ſpirit, and from that time become immortal. Deut. xxix, v. 29, *The ſecret things belong unto the Lord our God, but thoſe which are revealed, belong to us and to our children for ever, that we may obey all the words of the law.* Our Saviour after his reſurrection, told his diſciples, that it does not belong to us to enquire after thoſe things, which the Father hath been pleaſed to conceal, and I ſhould not have ſpoken on this ſubject at all, had not that groſs abuſe which hath crept into Chriſtianity, viz. purgatory, and prayers to dead men, obliged me to ſpeak of it, and ſhow the falſe foundation, which that deluſion is grounded upon.

CHAPTER VII.

Of RELIGION;

Or, thoſe DUTIES *required of* MAN *by* GOD.

I Have given my reaſons, for ſuppoſing that this our earth, neither has been, nor can continue for ever; that its beginning muſt have been from a limited time; and its diſpoſition, the work of an Omnipotent Power; that the Creator hath appointed animals into different claſſes; and endowed each with a different proportion, or degree of reaſon and judgment; that the human race is diſtinguiſhed, by ſuch ſuperior endowments, as that ſomething more is required from this ſuperiority, than what is exacted of brutes. If I believe in the exiſtence of a ſupreme Being, I muſt alſo believe that I ought to obey him. I cannot imagine that divine juſtice would require obedience, without informing me, what are theſe laws, which he requires I ſhould obey. It is impoſſible for the human mind to comprehend what God is; that is an idea, too great to be circumſcribed by our conception. Yet, from what we are enabled to form, it is impoſſible to ſeparate truth and juſtice from that idea, or that he will require a duty from man, which he has not endowed him with knowledge of, and capacity to perform. Human laws, made for the good and convenience of ſociety, may be impoſed on a multitude under ſubjection, by verbal or written orders, although the multitude are left ignorant of the motives, for which theſe laws were enacted; they are bound to obey them, or quit that ſociety. But laws given by God to man, muſt be ſuch as every one, as a man, muſt be acquainted with;

for

for in the ſight of God all men are equal, and make but one ſociety; and theſe laws muſt be equally impreſſed on his mind, as the knowledge of his exiſtence: to ſuppoſe otherwiſe, is to ſuppoſe the Almighty capable of injuſtice.

I ſhall conſider religion, firſt as a man, and then as a chriſtian. As a man, I find the only beings on earth ſubject to religious obligations, are the human ſpecies; and that they alone, are endowed with conſcience and reaſon. The juſtification, or condemnation of one brought to judgment, muſt be determined from his conforming, or not conforming, to ſome known law or rule of acting. There is no rule of acting, which ſubjects a man to judgment, and excuſes the brute, but that endowment which the human mind poſſeſſes, and the brutes do not. This therefore muſt be the law, by which man is to be tried: his conſcience is ſuppoſed to tell him his obligation, and his reaſon the manner, in which he is to execute it. If then I want to know the duty which God requires of me, I muſt examine what are theſe laws, he has not only imprinted on my mind, but alſo, by univerſal confeſſion, what are required of all others to conform to. This univerſal aſſent to what is our duty, is called *conſcience*, or the religion of nature; which tells me, I am to lead a life of humility to my maker, and be reſigned to his will; to obſerve truth, juſtice, mercy and benevolence to all mankind; and to make no other uſe of my dominion, over that part of the creation, which he has put under me, than what my neceſſities, or uſe of life require: that altho' my ſtation in the claſs of beings, gives me a privilege to demand their ſervice, it gives me none, to divert myſelf with their pain: We and they are made of the ſame materials (*clay*), and are both at an infinite diſtance from that Being who made us. The whole

in-

information, which my conſcience gives me as duty, ſeems comprehended in theſe; and that if I think or act, either beyond, or not up to them, I tranſgreſs the law of God. But altho' conſcience (or the idea of right and wrong,) is the ſame in all men, yet reaſon which is to explain and apply this rule, *conſcience*, is not equal in all men: our reaſon is often led aſtray by ignorance, by paſſion or prejudice; from whence different opinions, or ways of worſhip have ſprung up. Some few think that the Almighty is able, of himſelf to direct the world, and will require of no man a further conformity to his will, than as his conſcience has informed him, what that will is; while the major part of the world think, that God has been deficient in his information, and that his omiſſions muſt be ſupplied; that the obſervance of bodily ceremonies, and the belief of certain tenets, neither intruſted to conſcience, nor comprehended by reaſon, are neceſſary, if men would be acceptable to God; that he requires their aſſiſtance to explain and enforce his will. In conſequence of this, they declare their wiſdom to be the wiſdom of God; and out of zeal to ſerve him, think it their duty to exterminate every opinion, which ſuppoſes God may be worſhipped, in a manner different from their imaginations; and conclude, that all men ſhould be deſtroyed as wicked, who diſſent from them; and altho' neither reaſon, conſcience, nor ſcripture tell them, they have a right to judge their brother, they think, that by perſecuting ſuch as differ from them, they do God ſervice. They will not truſt the Almighty with vengeance, or delay puniſhment until the day of judgment, but will ſerve God, whether he will or not, in the manner, they judge moſt proper, he ſhould be ſerved.—Were the Almighty as ignorant of my thoughts as men are, who can only judge of what paſſes in the mind by external ſignals, I ſhould think

think myſelf obliged to ſhow the ſincerity of my worſhip, by ſuch rites and ceremonies, as faſts, penance, ſacrifices, bending the knees, &c. but he who knows my moſt ſecret thoughts, needs no external ſignals, to inform him of my intentions; he requires to be worſhipped, in ſpirit and in truth. Hypocriſy cannot deceive him; it may add to my crime, but cannot take away from his knowledge. Ceremonies have tended more, to deceive the underſtanding and lead it aſtray, than inſtruct it. Men who think it a religious duty to obſerve them, are apt to neglect the weightier matters of the law. The Jewiſh prophets are conſtantly upbraiding them with this neglect. Jeremiah ſays, *Truſt not in lying words; the* church *or temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord is this: Amend your ways and judge uprightly between man and man; oppreſs not the ſtranger, the fatherleſs nor the widow; ſhed not innocent blood, nor worſhip ſtrange gods. What have I to do wih the multitude of your ſacrifices? who hath required them of your hands? I ſpoke not to your fathers, nor commanded them, concerning ſacrifices and burnt offerings: But this I commanded them, that they obey my voice,* (or that inward law implanted in their mind to direct them.) And Iſaiah, Chap. 58. *They ſay, wherefore have we faſted? wherefore have we afflicted our ſouls, and thou regardeſt us not? Behold in the days of your faſt, you find pleaſure. You faſt for ſtrife and debate; to bow down the head like a bulruſh, to ſpread ſackcloth and aſhes under you; will you call this a faſt acceptable to me? The faſt I require is, to looſen the bond of wickedneſs, to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, &c. Shall you ſteal, murder, commit adultry, ſwear falſly, and burn incenſe to Baal; and then come and ſtand before me in this houſe, and ſay, we are delivered,* notwithſtanding theſe abominations.? *What, is my houſe become a den of robbers?* or in modern

modern words, will your going to church excuſe your wicked actions? does the obſervance of ceremonies and external rites, give you a privilege to commit iniquity? *Therefore*, ſaith the Lord, *my fury ſhall be poured out againſt this place to deſtroy it.*

When the Jews accuſed the diſciples of Chriſt, of a breach of the ceremonial law of Moſes, by plucking the ears of corn on the ſabbath, he told them, that if they knew the meaning of theſe words of the prophet Hoſea, *I require mercy and not ſacrifice, they would not have condemned the innocent:* and he deſires them to learn it. When Job is tempted by his wife, and wrongfully accuſed by his friends, he, in his juſtification, recounts his behaviour, in the different ſcenes, wherein men may be ſuppoſed to treſpaſs; and cannot find one inſtance, to accuſe himſelf of ſin: he indeed wonders at his afflictions, and in this ſurprize, wiſhes his adverſary had wrote a book, which might more amply acquaint him of his duty; that he would examine it with a greedy attention, to diſcover wherein he had (unknowingly) offended; but not in all the crimes, either ſuppoſed by himſelf or his accuſers, does the neglect of external rites and ceremonies ever enter their thoughts. Their whole reaſoning is employed, in his aſſerting, and their doubting his conformity to the moral duties.

Among the heathens, of clear judgment and unbyaſed conſcience, all religion is ſaid to conſiſt in obſerving a humble reverence to the Gods, and a ſtrict conformity to the moral duties; that neither pleaſure nor pain, threats nor promiſes, hopes nor fears, ſhould induce men to deviate from that internal rule, *right reaſon.* Jeſus Chriſt told the Jews, he was not come to deſtroy the law or the prophets, but to fulfil them: And when they told him, that, by the law of Moſes, a man might divorce his wife on any cauſe of diſlike, he anſwered, that

that altho' Moſes, for the hardneſs of their hearts, or perverſe diſpoſitions, was obliged to allow them this liberty, yet the law was not ſo from the beginning, or by the law of nature, which he came to fulfil. Paul ſays, *When they, who have not the law, do by nature, the things contained in the law, they are a law unto themſelves; their conſcience bearing witneſs, accuſing or excuſing their thoughts at that day, when God ſhall judge the ſecrets of hearts.* My conſcience is then the evidence by which I am to be tried; it is the monitor within me, which tells me what is right or wrong. My reaſon tells me, that the Divine Being is not to be impoſed on, that he requires the worſhip of the mind, and not of the body: Rites and ceremonies regard the body only; and are therefore no part of the worſhip he requires. That being, who knows my moſt ſecret thoughts, requires no expletive by outward ſhow. Jeremiah, ſpeaking of thoſe, who in future times, were to be obedient to the law of conſcience, ſays, *In thoſe days, they ſhall no longer ſay, the fathers have eaten a ſour grape, and the children's teeth are ſet on edge; but every man ſhall die for his own iniquity. The covenant which I ſhall make with them, is this; I will put my law in their minds, and in their hearts will I write it; they ſhall no more teach every man his brother, nor every man his neighbour, ſaying, know the Lord; for they ſhall all know me, from the leaſt to the greateſt; and if they obey this covenant, I will be their God, and they ſhall be my people; I will forgive their iniquities, and remember their ſins no more.* To remember ſins no more, ſignifies a previous commiſſion of ſins, which, on repentance and amendment, were to be forgiven. This paſſage comes nearer to the aſſurance given by Jeſus Chriſt, than any other in the Jewiſh prophets; it implies a promiſe of forgiveneſs of ſins, on repentance and amend-

amendment of life. This is what natural reaſon (merely) does not give us any cauſe to hope for; that only tells us, *that if we do good, we ſhall be rewarded, but if we do evil, we ſhall be puniſhed.*

With reſpect to religious duties, the religion of Chriſt differs no more from that of nature, than the root of a tree does from its branches; the fruit produced is the ſame; for chriſtianity doth not alter, but explain the law of nature.—A ſtrict obſervance of moral duties conſtitutes natural religion: Chriſt ſays, be innocent and all virtue follows of courſe. In the Moſaic Allegory, innocence is called the tree of life: and if we purſue the allegory, it will come out thus; The fruit of the tree (which Adam was required to feed on) is the execution of our duty; the branches ſignifies a knowledge of what theſe duties are, which are to influence and direct our actions; The body of the tree ſignifies a good conſcience, which preſents theſe duties to our mind; and the root is innocence, from whence they all proceed, and on which they all depend. Jeſus Chriſt commonly makes uſe of allegories to expreſs his doctrine, and to convey his inſtructions to the world: he ſays, *except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven.* This can admit of no other, than an allegorical interpretation: Innocence can be repreſented by nothing ſo properly, as by a new born child. It means, that if a man does not reduce his deſires and appetites, to that innocence, as of a new born child, he will not be accepted of by God. *Verily I ſay unto you, whoſoever ſhall not receive the kingdom of God, as a little child, he ſhall not enter therein.* Nothing can be agreeable to good morals, which is not innocent. Whatever God requires of man, muſt be agreeable to innocence; the precepts of God are all built on it. It is the ſimpleſt rule that can be given, and the moſt diſcernable; men may

be much eaſier miſtaken in what they think virtuous, than in what is innocent. Wiſdom, directed by conſcience and curbed by innocence, is that ſtate of mind, to which the ſupreme Being, in his covenant with man, has promiſed the great reward of a future happineſs in his preſence. The ſole caution given by Chriſt to his diſciples, when he ſent them abroad to teach the world, was, *Be ye wiſe as ſerpents and innocent as doves.* Wiſdom is the particular gift of God, and is diſtributed to man in different proportions; but a ſenſe of conſcience and knowledge of innocence, is given to all men, and by theſe they are directed to apply their wiſdom in their deſigns and actions. This is repreſented in the parable, by a prince giving money to his ſervants, to trade with during his abſence: on calling them to an account on his return, each, who had improved his ſtock, is rewarded accordingly; but he who did not improve it is condemned. Solomon ſays, *God made man upright, but he hath found out many inventions.* God introduced man into life in a ſtate of innocence, but leaving him afterwards to the direction of his own will, he left that ſtate. God, ſaith the ſon of Sirach, *hath ſet before man, life and death; and whether him liketh, ſhall be given him.* Natural religion acquaints man, that according to his conformity to the moral law, he will be either rewarded or puniſhed, but here it ſtops; it goes no further; here it leaves him.—By tranſgreſſing a law, a man becomes ſubject to the penalties of it, and none can pardon the treſpaſs, but the ſame power, by which the law was enacted. The religion of nature gives us no room to think, that repentance for crimes, will procure pardon from God: by it, they who tranſgreſs the law have no hope; but are left under the dreadful expectation of judgment and condemnation. Jeſus came and told mankind, that on a ſincere repentance

ance and amendment of life (by returning to that ſtate of innocence they had left) God would accept of their ſubmiſſion, pardon their paſt faults, and receive them again into favour: and to ſhow that he ſpoke by authority, he confirmed it by miracles. Miracles are a treſpaſs on the laws of nature. The laws of nature are the laws of God, and no power can alter them, but the power that inſtituted them: therefore when a miracle is wrought, and brought as an evidence to an aſſertion, to which our reaſon can neither aſſent or diſſent; if we are convinced of the reality of the miracle, we muſt alſo be convinced of the ſufficiency of the evidence. Natural reaſon gives us no right to expect forgiveneſs of crimes; but neither does it oblige us to think, that God will not pardon thoſe, who, on a ſincere repentance, return again to their duty. The idea we have of this mercy confirms this hope. Conſcience and reaſon are the ſtamp of God on the human mind, and if it ſhall pleaſe him to give us further information, it will not be in contradiction to his former laws; for God cannot contradict himſelf: But pardon, on repentance and a ſubſequent amendment of life, does not contradict his former laws; we have reaſon therefore, on ſuch evidence to believe it.

The goſpel Jeſus preached, reduces religion to the greateſt ſimplicity; it requires no learning to ſeparate virtue from vice, by intricate diſtinctions; but may be comprehended by the weakeſt judgment. God made man innocent, when he brought him into life; he requires he ſhould continue ſo, while in it. This is the whole duty of man. He who conforms to this, has not ſinned; he wants no pardon. Jeſus in the firſt part of his ſermon on the mount, pronounces ſuch particularly bleſſed, who conform to it; whom no revilings nor perſecution can make to de-

part from innocence. In the other part of his ſermon, he ſhews wherein men are generally miſtaken in their thoughts of good and evil; he ſays, he is not come to deſtroy or alter the law, but to fulfil and explain it. But that the law, which ſays, *Thou ſhalt not murder, nor commit adultry, nor ſteal, nor bear falſe witneſs; that men ſhould honour their parents, and love their neighbours*, extends much farther than what is implied, by the actual commiſſion of what is forbid, or the bare omiſſion of what is expreſſed; for that except our righteouſneſs exceeds this, we cannot enter the kingdom of heaven. *It is ſaid, thou ſhalt not murder; but I ſay unto you, whoever ſhall be angry with his brother without a cauſe*, or, in contempt of his ignorance, ſhall upbraid him with being a fool, commits a breach of the law; for to upbraid a man for natural ignorance, is to accuſe God who made him. In like manner he goes thro' the whole law, and ſhows that it is the intention of the mind, and not the actual commiſſion of any fact only, that makes a thing criminal before God; that if our neighbour offends us, we are not to revenge ourſelves; but we are to leave both judgment and vengeance to God; that what befalls an innocent man, is by his permiſſion; even *a hair of your heads ſhall not fall to the ground without it: Vengeance belongs to God, who will reward every man according to his works, whether they be good or evil. Ye have heard it ſaid, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth; but I ſay unto you, reſiſt not evil:* take not upon you, to avenge yourſelves of thoſe who hurt you; *do good to thoſe that hate you and pray for thoſe that deſpitefully uſe you: for if you only love and aſſiſt thoſe, who love and aſſiſt you, what merit have you?* What reward can you expect? This is that ſtate of innocence, he requires ſinners to return to, which if they do, they will obtain forgiveneſs: *Were their ſins as red*

red as ſcarlet, they ſhould be blotted out, and become as white as ſnow. There is one ſin excepted, and which he declares ſhall not be forgiven, either in this world or in the next; viz. *the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt*: and what this is, we may gather from the following paſſage. (John, Chap. 14, verſe 26.) *The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghoſt, ſhall come; he ſhall teach you all things*, and (chap. 15, verſe 26.) *When the Comforter ſhall come, whom I will ſend from the Father, even the Spirit of truth which proceeds from the Father, he ſhall teſtify of me.* The ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, is then a rebellion, or diſobedience to an order communicated directly from God to man: none but the prophets, inſpired by God, ſeem to be liable to this ſin. Thus Jonah's diſobedience to the divine commands, comes neareſt to the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, of any inſtance in the old teſtament; but as his diſobedience did not ariſe from perverſeneſs, but from terror, he was firſt ſtopt in his flight by a remarkable puniſhment; and then pardoned on his repentance, and conforming to the orders he firſt received. But in the Acts, it is ſaid, (chap. 6. verſe 3.) *Chuſe out from among you, ſeven men of honeſt report, full of the Holy Ghoſt and wiſdom.* So that the Holy Ghoſt does not always ſignify that ſpirit of truth, which can only be had by inſpiration from God; but that which ſprings from a thorough conviction and knowledge of the duties which God requires of man. Hypocriſy, or a deceitful oſtentation in the obſervance of religious ceremonies, in order to be taken notice of by men, is a crime he accuſes the Phariſees of; and which he often and particularly warns his diſciples againſt. He compares ſuch to ſepulchral monuments, which are ornamented without, but full of corruption within. This is a denying the omniſcient power of God, whom they would thus impoſe on; he ſays,

verily they have their reward. They uſe the ſhow of religion, to deceive men, and avail themſelves of their belief, for vain purpoſes,

In order to make men conceive his doctrine, he explains the inſtitution of life and purport of religion; that God created mankind to become, at the end of the world, immortal Beings; that he gave them rules to walk by; which, according as they obſerved, ſhould entitle them either to a ſtate of happineſs or miſery, in that eternity; that their life here, was only a ſtate of trial, which left them to the freedom of their own will, and by obedience or diſobedience, by their conforming or not conforming to theſe laws he had laid open to their minds, they were to chuſe, which ſtate they would inherit hereafter. He ſet before man, life and death, and which ever he choſe ſhould be given him. That at the end of the world, all men ſhould be judged according to their actions in this life, and be rewarded or puniſhed ſuitably; that their own conſcience and reaſon, (now their monitors) would then be their accuſers or excuſers, the chief witneſſes either to juſtify or condemn them; but, that rewards and puniſhments are not diſtributed here. *Do you think, that they, on whom the tower of Siloam fell, were greater ſinners than all others? I tell you, no.*—That riches, grandeur, or long life, were no particular ſigns of favour from God; on the contrary, that the great and opulent were in more danger of condemnation than others; their ſtation tempting them to employ that power entruſted, more to their own vanity and ſatisfaction in life, than to the ends for which it was given them. *A man cannot ſerve two maſters, God and Mammon*; and he who dedicates his mind to riches and ambition, can claim no reward at the day of judgment, for his actions on earth; that it is as difficult for a camel to go thro'

the

the eye of a needle, as for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven; that length of days, in general, is ſo little eſſential to eternal happineſs, or ſo ſeldom employed in a ſtrict conformity to the divine law, that the kingdom of heaven is chiefly compoſed of thoſe, whoſe ſhort lives had not rendered ſubject to temptation. *Suffer little children to come unto me, for of ſuch is compoſed the kingdom of heaven.* This doctrine he ſent his diſciples abroad to publiſh; which office the clergy now aſſume: and what is required of thoſe who do aſſume it, I ſhall next examine, both from the prophets, and from Jeſus Chriſt, and his apoſtles.

CHAP.

CHAPTER VIII.

Of the Office of a CLERGYMAN.

THE office of a clergyman is, in the old teſtament, typified by a watchman or ſhepherd; in the new, by that of a prince ſending his ſervants abroad to invite men to come to a feaſt. In the book of Ezekiel are theſe words, *If the people of the land take a man from among them, and make him a watchman; if he ſeeth the ſword come, and bloweth the trumpet and warneth the people, he that will not be warned, his blood ſhall be on his own head, and he that receiveth warning, ſhall ſave his own life: But if the watchman blow not the trumpet, and if the people be not warned; if the ſword come and take any perſon from among them; his blood will I require at the watchman's hand. Son of man, I have made thee a watchman; therefore hear my word and give warning: And if you do not admoniſh the wicked of his wickedneſs, that he may live; that ſame wicked man ſhall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thy hand.* (Chap. 34.) *As I live, ſaith the Lord, becauſe my flock is ſpoiled, and the ſhepherds fed themſelves, and not my ſheep; therefore I come againſt the ſhepherds, and will require my ſheep at their hands.* Jeſus Chriſt ſpeaking to his diſciples ſays, *Ye are the light of the world, ye are the ſalt of the earth: but if the ſalt ſhall loſe its ſavour, wherewith ſhall it be ſalted? It is good for nothing, but to be caſt out, and trodden under foot.*

Peter (1ſt Epiſ. chap. 5th) ſays, *feed the flock of God, which dependeth on you; not by conſtraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; not as tho' ye were lords, over God's heritage; but that*

ye

ye may be examples to the flock. Jeſus conſtantly illuſtrates his doctrine by metaphors, and compares the duty of his diſciples, to an invitation to a ſupper, by the ſervant of a great man. This parable is twice made uſe of. The people invited refuſe to come; he therefore orders his ſervants to invite all the poor, the maimed, the halt and the blind; and on the table not being full, he commands his ſervants to go the high ways and hedges, and *compel them* to come to the feaſt. The meaning of the parable is, that when the Jews, among whom the goſpel was firſt preached, refuſed to liſten to it, he ſent his diſciples abroad in the world to preach it to other nations; and directed them, that they were not to confine themſelves to ſuch only, who were willing to be inſtructed; but that they ſhould take pains, and uſe their utmoſt endeavours to convince men of their errors, that they might amend their lives. The propriety of the parable lies in this; conviction is to the mind, what compulſion is to the body; neither depend on the will: but it would be abſurd to apply thoſe means to one, which belong altogether to the other. I might as well lift a burden by thinking of it, as make a man learned by blows. If I want to convince a man of a propoſition in Euclid, I muſt apply to his reaſon; and ſhow him, that the properties aſſerted, are the neceſſary conſequences of the figure ſuppoſed. It is a certain truth, that the three angles of a plain triangle are equal to two right ones. But if I would compel a man to believe this, I muſt demonſtrate, from principles which he himſelf allows to be true, that which ever way the angles are inclined, yet when joined together, they are conſtantly equal to two right ones: and when his mind is thus informed, he is compelled to believe it. This is the compulſion meant in the metaphor; altho' bad men, for the vileſt purpoſes, have ſubſtituted

blows

blows and tortures, to compel the mind to believe, what it cannot be convinced of by reaſon, and adduce their authority for doing ſo, from this parable. In the other parable in Mathew, the ſervants are ordered to go to the high ways, and gather together, as many as they found, both good and bad, and bring them to the feaſt. When the prince afterwards, ſurveying his gueſts, obſerved one who had not a wedding garment on, him he ordered to be bound hand and foot, and caſt into outer darkneſs. To this the kingdom of Heaven is compared; and which, if taken in a literal ſenſe, is a moſt unjuſt ſentence. The invitation was to gather all thoſe, both good and bad, that could be found in the high ways, without regard to their dreſs or cloaths. But if by compulſion is meant conviction, the ſentence is juſt. By the wedding garment is meant a life conformable to a man's conviction, and the gueſt is puniſhed for hypocriſy, or acting contrary to his conviction. Paul ſays, "If we ſin wilfully, after "we have received the knowledge of truth, there "remains no more ſacrifice for ſin, but a certain "looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, "which will devour the adverſaries."

CHAP.

CHAPTER IX.

Of the MESSIAH.

THE excuſe made by our firſt parents, for not conforming to the divine law, was, that the feelings of their paſſions were too ſtrong; and had therefore yielded to a temptation, which they were unable to reſiſt: but God, to ſhow he had laid no reſtraint on them, which they might not have conformed to, told them, that one ſhould deſcend from them, whom no temptation ſhould make deviate from his obedience, and thereby take off that excuſe, the ſtrength of paſſion, which they alledged could not be reſiſted. This deſcendant was by the report of the prophets, to come by the line of Abraham, Jeſſe, &c. "In thy ſeed ſhall all the nations "of the earth be bleſſed." What manner of man this was to be, is thus deſcribed by Iſaiah, "There "ſhall come forth a rod from the ſtem of Jeſſe, a "branch ſhall grow out of his roots; the ſpirit of "the Lord ſhall be upon him, the ſpirit of wiſdom "and underſtanding, the ſpirit of counſel and might, "the ſpirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. "He ſhall not judge after the ſight of his eyes, nei-"ther reprove after the hearing of his ears; but "with righteouſneſs ſhall he judge the poor, and re-"prove, with equity, the meek of the earth: he ſhall "ſmite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with "the breath of his lips will he ſlay the wicked: Right-"eouſneſs ſhall be the girdle of his loins; he ſhall "ſtand for an enſign to the people; and to it ſhall "the Gentiles ſeek (or repair.) Behold my ſervant, "ſaith the Lord, whom I uphold as mine elect, in "whom my ſoul delighteth: I have put my ſpirit

"upon

" upon him; he ſhall bring forth judgment unto
" truth. He ſhall not fail nor be diſcouraged, until
" he hath ſet judgment on the earth, and the iſles
" ſhall wait for his law. Thus ſaith the lord, to him
" whom man deſpiſeth, to him whom the nations
" abhor, in an acceptable time have I heard thee,
" in the day of ſalvation have I helped thee; I will
" preſerve thee, and give thee for a covenant to the
" people, to eſtabliſh the earth; that thou mayeſt ſay
" to the priſoners, go forth; and to them who are
" in darkneſs, ſhow yourſelves. I the Lord, have
" called thee to righteouſneſs. I will hold thy hand,
" and give thee for a covenant to the people, and
" for a light to the Gentiles." The prophet introduces the Meſſiah, as in exiſtence, ſpeaking after this manner, " The ſpirit of the Lord is upon me, be-
" cauſe the Lord hath anointed me, to preach good
" tidings unto the meek; he hath ſent me to bind
" up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the
" captives, and the opening of the priſon to them
" that are bound, to proclaim the acceptable year
" of the Lord, and to comfort all that mourn; to
" give beauty for aſhes, and oil of joy for mourning.
" Liſten O ye iſles unto me, and harken ye people
" from afar: The Lord hath called me from the
" womb, he hath made my mouth like a ſharp
" ſword, and ſaid unto me, thou art my ſervant, in
" whom I ſhall be glorified: and now ſaith the Lord,
" who hath formed me from the womb, to be his
" ſervant (to bring Jacob again unto him,) altho'
" Iſrael be not gathered, (or will not hearken to my
" voice,) yet ſhall I be glorious in the eyes of the
" Lord. He hath given me the tongue of the learn-
" ed, that I may know how to ſpeak a word in
" ſeaſon, to him that is weary. He hath opened
" mine ears; I was not rebellious, neither turned
" back: I gave my back to the ſmiters, and my
" cheeks

" cheeks to him that plucked off the hair: I hid
" not my face from ſhame and ſpitting."

The obedience of the Meſſiah was to be tried to the utmoſt extent, that his example might take off all excuſe from ſinners. " Thus ſaith the Lord, I " will faſten him as a nail in a ſure place, and he " ſhall be as a glorious throne in his father's houſe. " And on that day, ſhall the nail which is faſtened " in a ſure place, be removed, be cut down, and " fall; and the burden which was upon it, ſhall be " cut off; for the Lord hath ſpoken it." And (Zechar. 11) " If ye think fit, give me my price, " and if not, forbear; and they weighed out for " my price thirty pieces of ſilver. And the Lord " ſaid, caſt it unto the potter; a goodly price, " that I was prized at, of them. And I took the " thirty pieces of ſilver, and caſt them unto the " potter, in the houſe of the Lord." (Chap. 13.) " And one ſhall ſay unto him, what are theſe wounds " in thy hands? Then he ſhall anſwer, thoſe with " which I was wounded in the houſe of my friends. " Awake, O ſword againſt my ſhepherd, againſt the " man that is my fellow, ſaith the Lord; ſmite the " ſhepherd, and the ſheep ſhall be ſcattered."

The Meſſiah was to ſuffer death with entire reſignation. His behaviour in this circumſtance, is thus deſcribed by Iſaiah, " He was deſpiſed and rejected " of men, a man of ſorrows and acquainted with " grief. He was deſpiſed, and we eſteemed him not; " we eſteemed him ſmitten and afflicted of God: " But he was wounded for our tranſgreſſions, and " the chaſtiſement of our peace was upon him; and " with his ſtripes we are healed. The Lord had laid " on him the iniquities of us all. He was brought as " a lamb to the ſlaughter; and as a ſheep before its " ſhearers is dumb, ſo he opened not his mouth. " He was cut off out of the land of the living, and

" for

" for the tranſgreſſion of my people was he ſmitten. " He made his grave with the wicked, and with the " rich on the earth; he had done no violence, neither " was there any deceit found in his mouth; yet it " pleaſed God to bruiſe him. Therefore, ſaid the " Lord, I will divide him a portion with the great, " and he ſhall divide the ſpoil with the ſtrong, be- " cauſe he hath poured out his ſoul unto death: for " he was numbered with the tranſgreſſors, and he " bare the ſin of many, and made interceſſion for " the tranſgreſſors." Such was the Meſſiah to be, the man whom God was to ſend on earth, for an enſign, or example to man, and for the inſtruction and redemption of repenting ſinners.

CHAPTER X.

Of the FULFILLING *of the* PROPHECY.

SUCH is the deſcription, the prophets gave of the Meſſiah, both of his manner of life, his reception in the world, and his reſignation at his death; who was to be deſcended from Jeſſe; who was to inſtruct and condemn the world; whoſe words were to ſlay the wicked, and teach the poor the way of ſalvation. The prophets had ſpecified the time when the Meſſiah was to come, and when this time came, Jeſus was born. He was of the lineage of Jeſſe, and from the womb, or earlieſt knowledge, he dedicated his time to the inſtruction and reformation of mankind. As he grew in years, he increaſed in knowledge; he waxed ſtrong in ſpirit. He was filled with wiſdom, and the Grace of God was upon him; or in the words of the prophet, *The ſpirit of wiſdom, and the fear of the Lord was upon him.* (Luke, 2d Chap.) *Jeſus increaſed in wiſdom and ſtature, and in favour with God and man*: He was made, in all things, like unto his brethren; he was tempted as they were; but his ſuper-excellence was, that he reſiſted all temptation. At a time when temptations may be ſuppoſed to have the greateſt effect on young minds, arrogance and ambition preſented themſelves to his mind. "If "thou beeſt the Meſſiah, the ſon of God, caſt thy-"ſelf down from this precipice; for it is written, "he ſhall give his Angels charge concerning thee, "leſt, at any time, thou daſh thy foot againſt "a ſtone. Again, the Devil took him up to an "exceeding high mountain, and ſhewed him all "the kingdoms of the world and their glory, and "ſaid,

" ſaid, all theſe things will I give to thee, if thou " will fall down and worſhip me." I do not think there was any perſonal converſation between Jeſus Chriſt and the Devil, or that it was neceſſary to go to the top of an exceeding high mountain, to ſee all the kingdoms of the world and their glory; he might have ſeen as much of them in a valley, as from the higheſt mountain on earth. The expreſſion means no more, than an allegorical repreſentation of theſe ideas, which were preſented to the mind of Jeſus by the Devil, which on reflection, he rejects or withſtands: for we are not to tempt providence, by putting ourſelves into unneceſſary dangers: and that the ſole buſineſs of life is, not to regard human grandeur, but to execute the commands of that Being who gave us exiſtence, and appointed us here: We are to dedicate all our care and all our life to his worſhip. Temptation is a ſuggeſtion raiſed in our minds by our paſſions, to do what our conſcience diſapproves of; where there is a compariſon made, between the enjoyment of what our paſſions provoke us to do, and that, which our conſcience tells us, our duty requires.

When the courſe of years arrived, which brings the human mind to its greateſt ſtrength, Jeſus began his miniſtry. He began to preach, and declare to man the will of God; *he did not fail, nor was he diſcouraged: he reproved with equity, and ſmote the wicked with the rod of his mouth.* He reproached the chief among the Jews with their hypocriſy, oppreſſion and ſuperſtition, who, under the gloſs of conforming to tradition, had made the law of God of no effect. He told them that their praying in the ſtreets or in public, ſhewed their intention was more to acquire approbation from men, than from God; and that they ſhould be rewarded accordingly. Reproof to honeſt men, always begets an examination

of

of their actions, and amendment of thoſe wherein they find themſelves wrong: In bad men, it excites malice and hatred to the perſon who diſcovers their iniquity, and reproaches them for it: They therefore became his enemies; they perſecuted him, they conſpired againſt him, they took him and put him to death. Pilate, whom he had not accuſed, found no fault in him; but the Prieſts, whom he had accuſed and reproached, found great fault in him. They alledged, they had a law which condemned him to death, for what might not appear to him as a crime. Pilate gave him up to be uſed according to their law: they judged and condemned him. While he was under his trial, and under the circumſtances of condemnation and death, his behaviour is as exactly deſcribed by the Prophets as by the Evangeliſts. "He was oppreſſed and afflicted, "he was brought as a lamb to the ſlaughter; and "as a ſheep before his ſhearers is dumb, ſo he opened not his mouth, (Iſaiah, chap. 1, 14.)" Jeſus had told his diſciples that he was the Chriſt foretold, who was to come for the reconcilation for ſin; that agreeable to the prophecy, he ſhould be put to death, and forſaken by them his Diſciples; but that in three days afterwards, he ſhould become alive and riſe from the dead (Mat. 27, verſe 22, 23,) "While "they abode in Galilee, Jeſus ſaid to them, the ſon "of man ſhall be betrayed into the hands of men, "who ſhall kill him; but, on the third day, he ſhall "riſe again." He was accordingly judged, betrayed and put to death in the manner foretold. The price given for betraying him, was thirty pieces of ſilver; and the uſe it was put to, was to purchaſe the potters field, after Judas, on his repentance, had thrown it down in the temple, agreeable to the prophecy of Zechariah, (chap. 1ſt, verſe 12, 13) It ſeems that when he told them, that to fulfill the

prophecy, he muſt be put to death and riſe again the third day, they did not comprehend, or take this prophecy, or his prediction in a literal ſenſe; for on the report of Mary, Peter and two others he appeared to, they ſtill doubted the reality of his reſurrection, but took it for an idle tale or impoſſibility. They ſaw indeed, that the body was gone, but could not perſuade themſelves, that its being gone, was owing to his reſurrection. But to their great aſtoniſhment, while they were met together privately, he ſtands before them, upbraids them with their unbelief of what he had foretold would come to paſs, and deſired them to come near, to examine and feel his wounds, that they might be convinced that it was no apparition or deception, but he himſelf who was crucified, and had now roſe from the dead: and ordered them to publiſh his reſurrection to the world, and teach all men thoſe things they had heard from him, that by this his reſurrection, they might ſhow the truth of a future reſurrection, and judgment of all men. But who would believe their report, beſides thoſe to whom the arm of the Lord was revealed? One of themſelves, who had not yet ſeen him, declared, that notwithſtanding their aſſertion, the prediction of Jeſus Chriſt himſelf, the prophecies which foretold the reſurrection of Chriſt, and altho' the body was gone from the ſepulchre, in a manner he could not account for, yet he never would believe, that the apparition they had ſeen, was the ſame perſon, whom he ſaw die on the Croſs, except his ſenſes convinced him, by ſeeing and feeling the wounds in his hands and feet. This Diſciple had the proof he required, but this proof could extend no further than to himſelf: the ſame objection, he had raiſed in his mind, before his conviction by his ſenſes, would occur to every one, to whom the reſurrection was told, without the ſame proof.

proof. Jeſus therefore told them, that all power was given him by his Father; and as he had confirmed his doctrine by miracles, he gave them the ſame power to confirm his reſurrection. *As my father hath ſent me, even ſo ſend I you; whoſe ſins ye remit, they are remitted; and whoſe ſins ye retain, they are retained.* He had cautioned them before his death, to take heed that no man ſhould deceive them, for that many would come in his name and deceive many; but he now gave them the ſigns, to know the true from the falſe teachers. *And theſe ſigns ſhall follow them that believe; In my name, ſhall they caſt out Devils, they ſhall ſpeak with new tongues, they ſhall take up ſerpents; if they drink any deadly thing, it ſhall not hurt them; they ſhall lay their hands on the ſick and they ſhall recover*; that he was then *to aſcend to his Father and their Father, to his God and their God; and would ſend them the Holy Ghoſt.* (or that Divine Spirit of Truth, which proceeds from the Father) *to inſtruct and direct them: that they ſhould be brought before kings and governors, to give teſtimony of his doctrine*: but deſires them not to be afraid, or concerned at what they were to anſwer; for it ſhould be given them at the ſame time, what to ſay; for that it would not be they, but the ſpirit of God, that ſpoke in them.

It is the greateſt power that can be given by God to men, to forgive ſins committed againſt himſelf: but Jeſus Chriſt has left us evident marks to know ſuch, to whom this power is delegated. He who can forgive ſins againſt God, is one, whom neither the venom of animals, nor poiſon can hurt; the application of whoſe hands ſhould inſtantly cure the ſick; and who, without learning, can ſpeak all languages. When I find ſuch a man, I ſhall believe he has power to forgive my ſins, for I believe in Chriſt. But if I find any man, or body of men, take on themſelves

to forgive ſins; and yet be ſubject to be hurt, either by venom or poiſon; or who cannot cure the ſick by the application of their hands; I ſhall believe ſuch to be deceivers, for I believe in Chriſt. Paul tells the Galatians, *There be ſome that trouble you, and would pervert the goſpel of Chriſt; but altho' we, or an Angel from heaven, preach any other goſpel, than I have preached, let him be accurſed: for the goſpel which I have preached, is not of man; neither received I it of man; but by the revelation of Jeſus Chriſt.* To the Epheſians, he ſays, *Let no man deceive you with vain words; for becauſe of thoſe things, cometh the wrath of God, upon the children of diſobedience.* Jeſus Chriſt, after leaving his final inſtructions with his diſciples, and telling them that he would be conſtantly with them, (or that they ſhould be conſtantly under his direction,) aſcended into heaven in their ſight.

It had been a received opinion among the Jews, that, about this time, the Meſſiah ſhould come, and reſtore the kingdom to Iſrael; which they miſtook to be that temporal power they had under David. The diſciples of Chriſt were of the ſame opinion; and altho' by his miracles and reſurrection, they were convinced he was the Chriſt, yet they ſtill imagined his kingdom was to be a temporal one. *Lord, is it at this time, thou wilt reſtore the kingdom to Iſrael?* Acts, 1ſt, 6th. He told them, he would ſend them the Holy Ghoſt, whereby they ſhould know the truth; he expounded to them the ſcriptures, and made them ſenſible, what the nature of his kingdom was; that is was not of this world, but a ſpiritual one, to be enjoyed after death. It was ſoon after the aſcenſion of Chriſt, that they gave an evident proof of this power, of being authoriſed to act by the Holy Ghoſt or Divine Spirit. A man forty years old, (lame from his birth, and whoſe ſupport was begging

begging at the gate of the Temple) at the word of Peter, is inſtantly cured, to the amazement of every one that knew him: for his being lame, from the place he conſtantly attended at for charity, muſt have been known to all in Jeruſalem. This miracle, wrought on ſo known an object, made ſo much noiſe, as enduced the rulers to examine into it. They called the man reſtored to his ſtrength of limbs, and Peter before them; and being ſatisfied, that the man, now before them, was the ſame beggar they had ſo long known lame; they aſked the Apoſtles, in whoſe name, and by what power they had done this? to whom Peter anſwered, *Ye rulers of the people, and Elders of Iſrael, if we are to be examined, by what means this man is made whole; be it known unto you, that in the name of Jeſus, whom ye crucified, whom God hath raiſed from the dead, even by him, doth this man ſtand before you whole.* This anſwer, from men whom they plainly perceived to be unlearned, diſconcerted the council. There was no denying the miracle; it was evident, both to them preſent, and to all in Jeruſalem. It reduced them to this *dilemma*, either that they had wrongfully put a juſt man to death, or that the Almighty had perverted nature, and wrought miracles in ſupport of falſehood. The firſt they would not allow, and the laſt could not be ſuppoſed; for, as the man cured of blindneſs, anſwered on a ſimiliar occaſion, *We know that God heareth not ſinners, but if a man be a worſhipper of God, and doth his will, him he heareth.* There was no evading this alternative, and therefore, to ſmother all further enquiry, they ordered the Apoſtles to preach no more in the name of Jeſus, and diſmiſſed them. On their continuing to preach in his name, the rulers had the Apoſtles brought before them a ſecond time, and ſaid, *Did we not ſtrictly command you to preach no more in the name of Jeſus? and be-*

hold you have filled Jeruſalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us.

It is a practice among bad men, to aſperſe thoſe they hate, and to alledge every crime againſt them, which a malicious world may be induced to believe. To excuſe themſelves for putting Chriſt to death, they aſperſed his doctrine, and thoſe who followed it, as guilty of what the world muſt think criminal. The apoſtles (guided only by the ſpirit of truth or the Holy Ghoſt) were open to the fraudulent deſigns of their enemies. They were characterized by them, then judged and condemned by the world, without examination. Paul, to avoid being put to death by the Jews, was obliged to appeal to Cæſar, and was thereon delivered up to the Roman governor, in order to be tranſmitted to Rome. He had been examined by Feſtus, and his accuſers called, to know what charge they had to lay againſt him, that along with his priſoner, he might tranſmit his crime. But Feſtus told Agrippa, that the Jews had no accuſation againſt him, of ſuch things, as he, from their clamour, imagined they had: but only ſome things concerning their own ſuperſtition; and about one Jeſus, who had been put to death, and whom Paul affirmed to be ſtill alive. This was a crime he had no conception of. If it was a miſtake in Paul, it was of too trivial a nature, either for the ſenate to inquire into, or for Cæſar to determine on. And it was unreaſonable to ſend a man priſoner, *and at the ſame time not withal to ſignify his crime.* When Paul came to Rome, he addreſſed himſelf to the chief of his countrymen there; and told them that altho' he had nought to accuſe his nation of; yet to ſave himſelf from the fury of ſome, who had ſworn to kill him, he was obliged to appeal to Cæſar. The Jews told him, they had received no letters, nor knew of any particular charge, their nation had againſt him; but as to that ſect, of which

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he profeſſed himſelf a member, it was univerſally ſpoken againſt. It is probable, that when Paul was delivered up among the reſt of the priſoners, the report of his crime was alſo made, when it appearing, that nothing was laid to his charge, but a diſpute with the Jews, whether or not, ſome certain man was ſtill alive, whom they had put to death; and which the Jews reſented ſo greatly, as obliged the priſoner to ſave himſelf from their fury, by appealing to Cæſar, and putting himſelf under the immediate protection of the Roman governor; and was ſent to Rome, not ſo much for being a criminal, as one who ſought protection, as being a Roman, that he was then diſmiſſed: and he remained at Rome for two years in his own hired houſe, where he had full liberty to preach the goſpel, both to Jews and Pagans. But there was one very material difference between thoſe whom he was to convert. Both the Jews and he believed in one omnipotent Being as God: to them he was to prove that the Meſſiah, promiſed and expected, was this ſame Jeſus whom they had crucified, but whoſe kingdom was not of this world. But the heathens, and particularly the Romans, had an infinite number of gods, which had each their particular temple and mode of worſhip. He was to prove to them, that theſe ſuppoſed beings, they worſhiped as gods, were only the fictions of men: this was downright atheiſm to them. To tell them of one omnipotent, eternal and inviſible God, whom no image could repreſent, nor could dwell in temples built by hands, but was every where, and at all times preſent, over all the expanded univerſe; to tell them of *Jeſus Chriſt* who was come into the world for their inſtruction, whoſe precepts they were to obſerve, whoſe example they were to follow, who was born and brought up in Judea, whom the Jews had unjuſtly put to death, who afterwards re-aſſumed life,

converſed with men on earth, and then (in their ſight) was taken up to heaven; this was a doctrine or ſyſtem, ſo widely different from what they were brought up to believe; from what they could conceive; that they would naturally conclude with Feſtus, that Paul was mad, and theſe notions the productions of a diſtempered brain.

All new ſyſtems require time to make them familiar to the mind, before it will allow an examination of them. It is with difficulty prejudices can be laid aſide, or the judgment induced to conſider ſuch novelties in a ſerious manner. But when by the continuance of Paul's preaching, and the curioſity of thoſe who went to hear him, men were induced to examine into the credibility of what he preached; they firſt began to doubt their own, and afterwards to adopt his doctrine. Curioſity is natural to mankind: A doctrine even ſeemingly abſurd, inclines men to hear and examine, what can be ſaid in ſupport and juſtification of it. This produced more hearers, and a further inclination to examine. The more they heard, the more they wanted to examine, until their curioſity ended in conviction; the conſequence of which was, an evident deſertion of the heathen temples. The heathen prieſts were too much concerned in this, not to be alarmed: they applied to government, to aboliſh this new ſect. Men who denied the very exiſtence of their gods, could have no regard for them, and they who did not regard the gods, would not be bound by any tie of virtue; whence aroſe that univerſal prejudice againſt them, as men capable of every vice. Thus Tacitus reports them to be men, *who, for their deteſtable crimes, were univerſally hated.* To tell truth in part of any thing, and falſify the reſt, is the ſureſt method to make calumny believed. It was true, the Chriſtians paid no regard to the gods of the Romans, but their believing in one univerſal omni-

omnipotent God, was concealed; and inſtead of that, it was ſaid that they allowed of none other God, *but one Jeſus Chriſt, who, in the reign of Tiberius, ſuffered death as a criminal, when Pontius Pilate was procurator of Judea.* Calumny thus artfully propogated, was the cauſe of all the ſubſequent perſecutions of the Chriſtians. Had Tacitus enquired, or informed himſelf of the tenets of the Chriſtians, he would have allowed them to be more pure in virtue than all theſe gods he worſhipped, of whom he ſays, "Such was the lukewarmneſs or indifference "of the deities, that they were alike unmoved by "patterns of righteouſneſs and thoſe of iniquity," (Anal. 7th) The increaſe of the Chriſtians, notwithſtanding the ſevere puniſhments inflicted on them, induced Pliny to enquire particularly into their tenets. He wrote to Trajan, that he had examined them in the ſtricteſt manner, even by torture; but that, beſide an obſtinate ſuperſtition, he found nothing but innocence and ſimplicity of manners among them; that by their profeſſion, they were neither to ſteal, rob, defraud, commit adultery nor tell a falſehood; that they had meetings before day, where they eat together, and then diſperſed; but although he found nothing criminal done at their meetings, yet he had forbid them; but that, notwithſtanding, their numbers were ſo great, that he begged the emperor's directions what to do with them. This queſtion could ariſe only from a ſuppoſition in Pliny, that although their ſtubborn ſuperſtition, in denying the very exiſtence of the Roman gods, made them juſtly puniſhable, yet their innocence of manners, and ſtrict obſervance of all the moral duties, deſerved pity. Trajan thereon directs, that if the Chriſtians were brought before him, he muſt puniſh them; but that no inquiry ſhould be made after them. This anſwer is rediculed by Tertullian as inconſiſtent. To

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puniſh men, when brought before a magiſtrate, ſuppoſes them criminal; and to forbid any enquiry to be made after them, ſuppoſes them innocent. But if Tertullian's partiality had not outweighed his judgment, he would have conſidered, that to ſupport the religion eſtabliſhed in any well regulated government, is the firſt object the laws attend to. Chriſtianity was quite oppoſite to that which the Romans profeſſed, not only as to the manner, but as to the object of worſhip. If they had any regard for their gods, Chriſtianity was the greateſt inſult that could be offered to them. In defence of their religion, they were obliged to perſecute the Chriſtians, and the emperor by his office, was obliged to put the laws in force. Pliny wrote, that except their ſtubborn ſuperſtition, they were a harmleſs and innocent people; and Trajan's order means only this, that in ſupport of the laws, they muſt be puniſhed when brought before him; but in regard to their moral behaviour in other reſpects, they ſhould not be ſought after. In this light, I ſee nothing inconſiſtent in Trajan's letter: The Chriſtians have not ſhown the like lenity in like circumſtances. Under the Chriſtian government, innocence in morals is no excuſe for him, who differs from the orthodox faith. For a man to plead his conſcience, will not ſave him from being puniſhed as a heretick. Perſecution never anſwers the end propoſed; men are inclined to pity thoſe who ſuffer, and their pity makes them enquire more minutely into the cauſe of their ſufferings; and often-times makes thoſe converts to that religion, who would not otherwiſe have thought of it. Nero's puniſhing the Chriſtians, by thoſe cruel and wanton deaths, for a crime, which all Rome knew, he himſelf *only* was guilty of, raiſed compaſſion in the ſpectators, and made them, notwithſtanding the bad opinion inſtilled into them of the Chriſtians, more minutely enquire into

to the nature of their crimes, into the nature of their opinions; for their opinions were their crimes. Truth always gains by enquiry. I am perſuaded, Nero's cruelty did not deſtroy more Chriſtians, than it gained proſelytes to Chriſtianity: they were ſtill perſecuted and they ſtill increaſed. I cannot tell whether it was compaſſion or policy, that made Alexander Severus favour the Chriſtians; but had he known their tenets, he never would have applied to an oracle to know, whether he ſhould allow temples to be built to the God of the Chriſtians. Demetrius the ſilver-ſmith at Epheſus, had determined that point long before: He heard Paul preach, and ſoon found that what he taught, was deſtructive of his intereſt; he thereon called together his fellow craftſmen, and candidly laid their mutual danger before them, viz. "By this craft, we have our wealth, but this Paul "has perſuaded and turned away many people, ſay-"ing, that they be no Gods who are made by hands; "ſo that not only our craft is in danger to be ſet at "naught, but the temple of the great goddeſs Diana, "will be deſpiſed, and her magnificence ſet at "nought and deſtroyed, whom all Aſia and the "world worſhip." The moſt orthodox prieſt in the Empire could not have given a more juſt, nor a more honeſt reaſon for aboliſhing chriſtianity than Demetrius did, without the aſſiſtance of an oracle. The worſhip of the God of the chriſtians, and that of the ſuppoſed gods of the reſt of mankind, he found, would be inconſiſtent. And this was the anſwer the oracle gave to Alexander.

CHAP-

CHAPTER XI.

Of FAITH.

FAITH is a belief, built *ſolely* on theſe principles which reaſon preſents to the mind. It is defined by St. Paul to be, *the ſubſtance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not ſeen.* It is a belief, our ſenſes can give us no information of; it does not come under compariſon with what we obſerve. Our conſcience, ſupported by our reaſon, is the only evidence upon which we are to ground our belief: by them only we are to judge. *The ſubſtance of hope is belief*, which we can never increaſe to perſuaſion, except our reaſon firſt makes it probable. *Through faith we underſtand that the world was formed by the word of God, ſo that the things which are ſeen, were not made by the things that do appear.* The human mind from its confined knowledge, cannot conceive the power, or manner how the ſpirit of God operated, when he formed the world: but the idea I have of his omnipotence, is (to my reaſon) evidence ſufficient, that it was formed at his command. In matters of faith, there muſt be a conſiſtency, between the efficient power and the effect produced: this, when examined by my reaſon, and approved of by my judgment, becomes faith or belief in my mind. The idea I have of omnipotent power, is conſiſtent with that, of his creating the world, and the inſtitution of theſe laws, by which it is governed; but I am obliged, at the ſame time to annex to it, an equal idea of juſtice in that power; or, that as he has created inhabitants for this world, and requires obedience from them, ſo he muſt alſo have endowed them with a knowledge of what theſe laws

laws are, to which he requires obedience; but obedience or diſobedience ſuppoſes a free will, or liberty to chuſe if they will obey or not. The idea I have of Divine Juſtice, is to my mind, a ſufficient conviction, that he will reward or puniſh men according to their obedience: and univerſal obſervation tells me, that theſe rewards and puniſhments are not diſtributed, while men are here on earth. If then men are to undergo a trial, there muſt be a re-exiſtence given them, to ſubject them to this trial. Now altho' human knowledge does not extend ſo far, as to inform us of the manner of this re-exiſtence, or of the nature of theſe rewards or puniſhments, then to be allotted; yet our ignorance, or want of conception, from our confined judgment, is no reaſon for us to deny that power in the Almighty; no more than that our not being able to conceive the manner by which the world was created by him, ſhould induce us to believe, that it was never created. That God who created the world, has a power to give a re-exiſtence to man, that he will execute this power at an appointed time of judgment after death, and reward every man according to his works, is the baſis of all religion, and the faith ſpoken of by St. Paul. The power of God we cannot judge of: but in affairs of this life, we are enabled to judge by compariſon and obſervation; and by thoſe, and our reaſon, we are bound to judge.

There are many things the objects of faith, in which reaſon does not immediately interfere. We often believe hiſtory from the faith we have in thoſe who report it; and altho' we were not witneſſes of the facts related, yet if our reaſon has nothing to object, we receive the relation as truth; but if our reaſon does not diſcover ſome near affinity between the facts related, and the cauſe which produced them, our reaſon doubts their truth; and if it diſcovers a contradiction

tradiction between what is related and what we obſerve, we diſbelieve the facts, and conclude the relation to be falſe. No hiſtorian could induce me to believe, that a ſparrow could fly away with an ox; becauſe the idea I have of the ſtrength of a ſparrow, is inconſiſtent with the idea I have of the weight of an ox. No cauſe occurs to my reaſon to object againſt the ſuppoſed exiſtence of Alexander, Julius Cæſar or Veſpaſian: But when I am told that Veſpaſian wrought miracles, that he cured the blind and the lame; I aſk, to what purpoſe did nature ſo far go out of its manner, to ſhew this power in Veſpaſian? Was it to convince the world, that God had appointed him Emperor, as the kings of England did, when their touch cured the Scrophula? or was it in evidence to mankind, of ſome propoſition or particular information, which could not be proved without this interpoſition of providence? I am told that neither of theſe appeared, or was alledged. I am perſuaded that nature will never vary, or go out of its way, to no purpoſe; and that therefore in this, hiſtory has reported a falſehood; as one of their own poets very juſtly obſerves, *Nec Deus interſit, niſi dignus vindice nodus inciderit.* There are certain limits to the natural aſſent of the mind, beyond which true faith or real belief cannot be puſhed: if it is attempted, reaſon ſteps in, and forbids it. Whoever therefore would enſlave the mind, muſt inſtil into it ſome principle to counteract reaſon. Dread and fear have been, with great ſucceſs, called in for this purpoſe. It has been inculcated by the clergy into weak minds, that except men give up their reaſon, they cannot be chriſtians, or acceptable to God; and give for inſtance the example of Thomas the Apoſtle, who would not give up his reaſon or belief on the report of others, that Jeſus was come to life again, until he had the demonſtration of his ſenſes. And he was, on that account

account, blamed by his maſter. But this diſbelief in Thomas, did not riſe from his reaſon but his prejudice: Obſervation on things paſt, did not allow him to underſtand, or give credit to what his maſter had foretold. The other Apoſtles were of the ſame belief with Thomas, before they ſaw him; they believed the report of the women was an idle tale.

It is aſſerted by the clergy, that chriſtianity is a revealed religion; the knowledge of which could not therefore be attainable by reaſon, which with conſcience, is the baſis of the religion of nature; but that Chriſt had revealed to mankind a new obligation, quite unknown before, which revelation muſt relate to ſome principles of faith, different from, and independent of thoſe, on which the religion of nature is built: for if it did not, it could not be called a new or revealed religion. It therefore cannot be confined to thoſe rules, (conſcience and reaſon) on which that of nature is built. From this it muſt follow, that the Chriſtian faith is not to be judged of, by the law of reaſon; and except a man gives up his reaſon, and believes in what he cannot conceive, and be fully convinced of the truth of a propoſition he is incapable to judge of, he cannot, by the churches doctrine, eſcape the wrath of God. After ſuch a hard ſentence, a man is naturally led to enquire, what are theſe inconceivable propoſitions, which, in contradiction to reaſon and judgment, he is obliged to be convinced of, to eſcape the wrath of God. If I ſearch for them among the precepts delivered by Jeſus Chriſt, I ſhall not find them; but I am told they are *myſteries*, found out by the fathers, confirmed by councils, and adopted by the church, which has an excluſive power to interpret the precepts and doctrine of Jeſus Chriſt; and therefore have a right to pronounce damnation againſt every one, who does not receive their interpretation. To

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them, to whom this power ſeems evident, fear and dread will certainly make them throw aſide both their conſcience and reaſon, as the greateſt enemies to their ſalvation. But I am convinced that my reaſon and conſcience is the law implanted in me by God: I will therefore give more credit to that law, than to their interpretation, whatever be the power, by which they claim a right to impoſe it; and will examine by myſelf, the doctrine delivered by Chriſt, without regard either to the power or the threats of the church. I find in the doctrine of Jeſus Chriſt, ſome things, which my reaſon could not inform me of, but none that I cannot aſſent to: and altho' he hath opened a way to mercy unknown to me before, yet my ſalvation does not depend on my knowing this, but on my conforming to the terms of it. " If " ye know theſe things, happy are ye if ye do " them." The Apoſtle James ſays, " Thou believeſt " there is one God; thou doſt well: The Devils " believe alſo; but know, that faith without works " is dead. Show me thy faith without thy works, " and I will ſhow you my faith by my works." The church will not give me liberty to think, yet the ſame apoſtle tells me, " That it is by this my liberty, " I am to be judged. So ſpeak, and ſo do, as they " who ſhall be judged by the law of liberty." I find Jeſus Chriſt conveys his inſtructions, both by direct precepts and by allegories; and that the origin of all the inconceivable myſteries, impoſed by the church, has riſen from theſe ſentences being explained in a direct way, which he intended as allegorical. Biſhop Stillingfleet, I think obſerves, that the main inlet to all the diſtractions, confuſions and diviſions in the chriſtian church, has been, by adding other conditions to church communion, than Chriſt had ordered; that the grand commiſſion, given to the Apoſtles, was to teach what Chriſt had commanded them;

them; but not the leaſt intimation given them to impoſe, or require any thing beyond what he himſelf has ſpoken. And Mr. Locke obſerves, "that "ſetting up as articles of faith, propoſitions not di- "rected by Chriſt or his Apoſtles, is the foundation "of all that ſuperſtition, which Popery has introduced; "that were men, unbiaſſed, ſent fairly to the Bible to "ſearch for, and find out their religion; and not the "Bible put into their hands, to point out paſſages fa- "vourable to any particular ſect or doctrine, neglect- "ing or miſrepreſenting all others; Chriſtendom "would have more chriſtians, and thoſe more know- "ing, more unanimous and more in the right, than they now are." Men, by nature, have the ſame ideas of right and wrong, true and falſe, probable and improbable, and when the ſame evidence is laid before them, they will nearly draw the ſame inferences from what they read. The New Teſtament is open to all men, who, if left entirely to themſelves, would nearly agree in determining, what ſentences ſpoken by Jeſus Chriſt, are to be underſtood in a direct ſenſe, and what in an allegorical one. I believe chriſtianity, like a river, the further it has run from its ſource, the more it has been corrupted, by mixing with, or imbibing what did not come from the original ſpring, or that doctrine which Jeſus commanded his Diſciples to declare in his name. Mahomet took notice of the many corruptions introduced into chriſtianity, and mentions them in his rapſody of the Koran. He therefore orders his followers never to exceed the bounds of their religion. Chriſtianity began very early to be corrupted: St. Paul complains of it, and cautions both the Gallatians and Epheſians to guard againſt innovations. And St. John in his review of the churches, accuſes ſome of falling off from the purity of the chriſtian doctrine, by their innovations. The doctrine of Chriſt, met with the ſame pollutions, from deſign or miſtake,

as the religion of nature did. It was a groſs deviation from that natural law of duty, (which our Saviour tell us was from the beginning) by the many corruptions, which the paſſions of man had introduced, which made the coming of the Meſſiah neceſſary, to reinform mankind, and ſhow how far they had deviated from what God had from the beginning commanded. He ſays, "Think not I am come to deſ-
"troy the law or the Prophets, I am not come to
"deſtroy but to fulfil them: For verily I ſay unto
"you, that until heaven, and earth paſs away, one
"jot or one tittle ſhall in no way paſs from the law,
"till all be fulfilled." Again, "No man can come
"to me, except the Father draw him: Every man
"that hath learned of the Father cometh unto me."
To learn or to be drawn of God, is to live agreeable to theſe natural laws of duty, which he hath implanted in our minds; ſo that no man can be a follower of Chriſt, except he is firſt a good man, a ſtrict obſerver of that original law which proceeds from God; and if he does not ſubject himſelf to that original law, Jeſus declares he cannot receive him; for he came not to alter the law, but to explain and fulfil it: his preaching was to perſuade men to return to the obſervance of it, which if they did he promiſed that they ſhould find mercy with the Father. It is the law which all good men have obſerved before the coming of Chriſt: by obeying this law, Job kept his integrity during all his trials. The ſole end of the preaching of the Jewiſh prophets was, to perſuade them to conform to this law; and we find among the Heathens ſome or other of them, who, from the knowledge and tenor of that law only, have recommended every moral precept ſpoken of by Jeſus Chriſt, in his ſermon on the Mount. Revenge, ſwearing, profaneneſs, even ſpeculative luſt, with every other vice is forbid, and every virtue recommended. They declare that

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the worſhip of the Gods ſhould be with all ſincerity, chaſtity, holineſs, and piety: that they are to be reverenced, with a pure, entire and uncorrupted mind; and that even the fear of death ſhould not make a man depart from his uprightneſs. The object of worſhip was the only article they were ignorant of. The difference then between revealed religion and that of nature, doth not conſiſt in a difference of morals.

I ſhall next conſider wherein it differs in other reſpects, or conveys inſtruction, where the religion of nature leaves us ignorant. In this enquiry I ſhall take the liberty, to believe *that only*, to be the chriſtian doctrine, which Chriſt himſelf has declared to be ſuch; and *that only* to be the the proper interpretation of his words, which his uſual phraſeology makes agreeable to my judgment. Conſcience and reaſon are the rule given me by my Creator to know his will, and direct my judgment; and God cannot contradict himſelf, nor impoſe new laws on me, inconſiſtent with thoſe he has already, by nature, endued me with knowledge of. Whatever is truth, whatever is required of me to believe, muſt be conformable to theſe; if what Chriſt has directed was not ſupported by them, I would not be a chriſtian. But as I find no precept of his to diſagree with theſe, but on the contrary an explanation of the Divine will, quite conformable to the idea I have of the Deity, I therefore am a chriſtian.

When Jeſus Chriſt declared to the world the will of God, and the manner in which he required to be worſhipped, it was to this law he appealed, to convince mankind of the truth of his doctrine. He ſays, "I tell you the truth and ye believe me not. Which "of you convinces me of ſin? and if I tell the truth, "why do ye not believe me?" He here makes that internal original law, the rule of judgment to diſtin-

guiſh truth from falſehood; and challenges them to ſhow, wherein he had differed from it, either in his life or doctrine. This doctrine, he himſelf has ſufficiently explained, and I think plainly enough expreſſed; and I know of no excluſive power, delegated by him to any body of men, to affix a particular meaning to any of his precepts. We are told that no prophecy is of any private interpretation; that every man ſhould be convinced in his own mind, and therefore every man has a right to judge for himſelf. There can be no merit, where there is no free choice: What a man is compelled to do, is to him neither virtue nor vice. We are deſired by the Apoſtles "ſo to ſpeak and ſo to do, as they, who "ſhall be judged by the law of liberty; for why "ſhould our liberty be judged of, by another man's "conſcience. Let us therefore ſtand faſt in the "liberty, wherewith Chriſt has made us free; for "where the ſpirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." And if this is the doctrine of Chriſt, we muſt conclude, that where there is not liberty, there the ſpirit of the Lord is not. It was reaſon and conviction, and not force, that induced the Diſciples of Jeſus to believe him; by this, his Apoſtles eſtabliſhed his Divine doctrine; and by the ſame free appeal to reaſon and conſcience, which induced them to hearken to, and believe him, ſhould every man examine the doctrine of Chriſt, and eſtabliſh his own faith. But for what cauſe, beſides a worldly, a political one, the church have taken on themſelves, to put an interpretation on ſome paſſages of the ſcripture, which is inconſiſtent with what others in the new teſtament will admit of, and denounce the wrath of God on thoſe who diſſent from them, beſides puniſhing them to the utmoſt of their power in this world, I can neither conceive myſelf, nor will they inform me of: for when they are aſked to reconcile them, their

anſwer is ; that theſe are *myſteries*, which altho' they can neither be conceived by the human mind, nor explained by human reaſon, muſt ſtill be believed ; that theſe are articles of faith given, to try our obedience ; and the more abſurd they may ſeem, the more is our merit in believing them. This anſwer may ſatisfy one, who, from habit, prejudice or indolence, thinks himſelf ſufficiently a chriſtian, by aſſenting to whatever the church directs ; but will never ſatisfy one, who chooſes his religion from his own conviction ; or claims that liberty of judging, ſo much recommended by Chriſt and his Apoſtles. Of this latter claſs I am ; and I ſhall no farther regard the articles of faith decreed by the church, than as I find them conformable to the precepts of Chriſt, explained by my own reaſon ; for liberty of thought is as eſſential to the religion of Chriſt, as to that of nature. It was in oppoſition to the habits, the prejudices of the Jews, and the unanimous opinion of the chief prieſts and Scribes, that Jeſus Chriſt promulgated his doctrine. Had his hearers thought it neceſſary, to have the concurrence of the Jewiſh church (the chief prieſts) to direct them in their belief, and authorize their faith, he would not have gained one proſelyte; yet the Jewiſh church was of Divine inſtitution. But they had corrupted it; they indeed kept up the ceremonies, but neglected the ſpirit of the law. May not the ſame falling off, have happened in the chriſtian church ? Hiſtory gives us an account of none more wicked, than ſome of the chriſtian clergy have been, and ſcarce any ſo openly ſo, as ſome of the very heads of the church have ſhewn themſelves. What was ſaid of the Jewiſh clergy, may be with much more propriety, ſaid of them ; *Their prieſts teach for hire, and their prophets divine for money, and like a troop of robbers, they murder on the high way by conſent.*

CHAPTER XII.

Of my BELIEF.

JESUS, in his inſtructions, declares himſelf a man, the ſon of man. This is an expreſſion common among the prophets, to ſignify the human ſtate, or a being altogether human; and generally human nature in its weak, helpleſs ſtate, as, *the ſon of man in whom there is no help—The ſon of man which is a worm—The ſon of man which ſhall be made as graſs.*—He ſays, he was ſent into the world, commiſſioned by God to diſcloſe his will to mankind; that the inſtructions and precepts which he delivered, whereby men may be enabled to obtain mercy, were not from himſelf, but from God, whoſe meſſenger he was. And that he was this meſſenger he proved by his miracles, but much more by the purity of the doctrine he taught. And to the attributes of truth and juſtice (which conſcience and reaſon endowed us with the knowledge of, as eſſential to the Deity) he added that of mercy to men, on repentance and amendment of life. This is an attribute, no way inconſiſtent with my conſcience and reaſon to aſſent to. It becomes the ground of our hopes, and ſhould excite in us, a love and reverence for the Deity, who thus has had compaſſion on our infirmities. There is no force put on my mind to believe this; yet this is the whole myſtery of chriſtianity; the light which nature could not give us. This is the hope, wherein the religion of nature was defective. He ſaid, the ſole end, for which life is given to men, is to try their obedience to God, by their conformity to his will; that therefore it was fooliſh in men to throw away their time here, to any other purpoſe,

purpoſe, than on that, for which life was given them; for they knew not how ſoon it might be demanded of them. The ſyſtem of morals he gave, was the moſt complete, and built on the ſimpleſt and plaineſt foundation, that could be given, to make all the actions of men, while on earth, directed to one ſole object; that, at the time of judgment, they may obtain mercy, and enjoy happineſs in eternity. In order to this, he recommends truth, juſtice and mercy, (the attributes of the Deity) to be obſerved by men; and to leave to God, to judge and avenge the injuries done them by others; to be patient under affliction, and reſigned to the will of God; to imitate God, to the utmoſt of their power, *by being perfect as their father in heaven is perfect*; that the utmoſt happineſs which men can enjoy here, is of a ſhort duration; that riches and power on earth, are not to be regarded as bleſſings; they are only opportunities given men to try their obedience, by which they ſhould be judged; and *to whom much was given, of them much would be required*; that as God, by him, had promiſed forgiveneſs of ſins, upon a ſincere repentance and amendment of life, they ought not to delay it; but be always ready to ſubmit to death, when ſummoned to leave life; that without repentance there could be no forgiveneſs; and that there was no repentance in the grave. He accuſes the Jews, that they would not hearken to him, tho' neither his doctrine, nor his example could be accuſed. *I tell you truth and ye believe me not. Which of you convinces me of ſin? Why then do ye not believe me?*

His unexceptionable doctrine ſhewed them their duty; and his example, conformable to it, ſhewed them, that God required nothing of them, but what they might conform to; yet would they not hearken to him, nor believe him.

The Jews ſeem to have been a people, from the beginning, whom reaſon could not convert: it was ſigns and wonders which directed their faith. They were worſe than the heathens; for with the Jews, reaſon was no motive for conviction. They aſked a ſign, and Jeſus told them, that ſince neither the miracles they had ſeen him perform (which they attributed to Necromancy) nor the doctrine he preached, could convince them he was ſent by God; they ſhould have no other ſign but that of *Jonas*, who was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, and then came again into the world; ſo he ſhould be ſo long under the power of death, and then reaſſume life. That the ſame prophecy which had foretold his coming, had alſo foretold his death, by thoſe he came to inſtruct: but that it would be better, on the day of Judgment, with thoſe of Sodom and Gomorrah, than with that perverſe generation; that thoſe of Nineveh ſhould condemn them, for that they had repented, on the preaching of Jonas, while a greater than Jonas was there. Our Saviour here upbraids the Jews with incorrigible incredulity, and ſeems to give them up to the perverſe diſpoſition of their own hearts. The miracles he had already wrought, had not convinced them, that he was aſſiſted by a divine power; neither had the conformity of his behaviour to the precepts he taught, cleared their minds of the ſuſpicion of hypocriſy. He therefore aſks them, *Which of you convinces me of ſin?* He had explained to them the will of God, as recorded by the prophets; and by his own example ſhown, that God requires no more than man can perform. They had now therefore no cloke for their ſin; nor ſhould theſe Jews have any other ſign from him, to evince his divine miſſion, than that which ſhould be the conſequence of their own wickedneſs, viz. his reſurrection to life, after being put to death by them. Jeſus's perſevering

ſevering in his uprightneſs (under all his temptations and perſecutions) unto death, made him that example, which takes off from men, all excuſe for ſin: He ſays, *If I had not come among them they would not have had ſin, but now they have no cloke for their ſin.* And Peter ſays, *He acted in all things conformable to the will of God: he did well, yet ſuffered for it; he bore his ſufferings patiently, and was therefore acceptable to God; and has left us an example whereby to follow his ſteps; who altho' he committed no ſin, neither was guile found in his mouth; who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he ſuffered, he threatened not, but committed himſelf to him, that judgeth righteouſly.*

An example, by which the world can be condemned, or which leaves no cloke or excuſe for ſin, muſt be between beings equally qualified. It is no crime in an elephant, that he has not the ſwiftneſs of a grey-hound; nor in the grey-hound, that he has not the ſtrength of an elephant: they are not ſimilarly qualified, and their different perfections cannot condemn one the other.

If Jeſus was endowed, above the ability of man, his conformity to the doctrine he taught, could be no condemnation to mankind: they are not equally qualified; they would therefore have ſtill had a cloke for their ſins. All men would be good, if they had no temptation to be otherwiſe; but all men are liable to temptations, and the reſiſting them more or leſs, diſtinguiſhes the good from the bad, the virtuous from the vicious. Jeſus ſhewed they might be reſiſted altogether; he overcame every temptation, which, either the Devil, or the perſecution of human malice could preſent to him: and his example becomes our condemnation. He was tried to the utmoſt, and like gold tried in the fire, he remained pure. The miracles he performed,

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were the conſequence of his uprightneſs; and by his words, it would ſeem, that an exact conformity to the Divine will, would give any man that power. He ſays to his Diſciples, *If ye had faith, as a grain of muſtard ſeed, ye might ſay to this mountain, be removed to yonder place; or to this ſycamore tree, be plucked up by the roots, and planted in the ſea, and they would obey you.*

Jeſus, having committed no ſin, having never tranſgreſſed the laws of God; and the day of judgment being appointed, at the end of the world, to try ſuch as had tranſgreſſed, it was not required of him to continue in the ſtate of death, until the general time of trial: for as no crime could be alledged againſt him, he had none to detain him under the power of death; he therefore roſe from the dead the third day. He continued ſo long under the power of death, as to ſhew that he had been dead; and roſe to ſhow, that as death was the conſequence of ſin, ſo was life that of righteouſneſs: it was therefore not required of him to wait for judgment, but was immediately changed into that ſtate of immortality, the promiſed reward of obedience to the Divine laws. He told alſo, that at the day of judgment, he ſhould be appointed judge of the world, agreeable to what Iſaiah had propheſied. *Thus ſaith the Lord, I will cloath him with thy robe; and ſtrengthen him with thy girdle; and commit thy government into his hands. He ſhall open, and none ſhall ſhut; and he ſhall ſhut and none ſhall open.* If any thing can raiſe in our minds, an idea of Divine mercy and juſtice, it muſt be, that we are not to be judged by a Being. " inſen- " ſible of our paſſions or ſuperior to our feelings; " but by one made, in all reſpects, as we are."

The tremendous judgment, when all the human race are to reaſſume life, thoſe who have done good to the reſurrection of life, and thoſe who have done evil

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to the reſurrection of damnation, is allegorically deſcribed in the Revelations by a book; in which the merits and demerits of every one are written, and out of which they were to be judged. It is proclaimed by a great Angel, that if any could be found, whoſe life was free from ſin, he ſhould then come forth, that he might open the book, and be appointed to judge mankind, whoſe actions were all recorded there.—*And I wept much, becauſe no man was found worthy to open the book; neither to look on it: and one of the Elders ſaid unto me, weep not; for behold the Lion of the tribe of Judah, of the root of David, he hath prevailed to open the book, and to looſen the ſeals thereof. And they ſung a new ſong, ſaying, thou art worthy to take the book; and to open the ſeals thereof; for thou waſt ſlain, and haſt redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and nation, and people. And I heard the voice of many Angels ſaying, worthy is the Lamb that was ſlain, for receiving power, riches, wiſdom, ſtrength, honour, glory and bleſſing. And every creature in heaven and in earth, heard I ſaying, bleſſing, and honour, and power, and glory be to him, who ſitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.* Revel. chap. v.

Paul to the Corinthians, ſpeaking of the reſurrection, and laſt judgment, ſaith, *Then cometh the end, when he ſhall deliver up the kingdom to God, even to the Father; for he muſt reign, until he have put all things under his feet. Now, when he ſaith, all things are put under him; it is manifeſt that he is excepted, who put all things under him: and when all things ſhall be ſubdued unto him; then ſhall the ſon alſo himſelf be ſubject to him, who had put all things under him; that God may be all in all.*

I obſerve an exact conformity between what is propheſied of the Meſſiah, and what is related of Jeſus. The deſcription, given by the prophets of the

the Meſſiah, was very particular; and he in every particular anſwered it, both as to the time of his appearance in the world, his doctrine, his reception in the world and manner of death; ſo is there between the principles he lays down, and the duty he requires; my belief here is no where ſtretched beyond my reaſon; nor does any part of the ſyſtem claſh with the other. That the Almighty, who created man, ſhould at the ſame time, by an internal law, inform him of the duty he requires, and that he ſhould endow him with paſſions to try his obedience to this law, is quite agreeable both to my reaſon and experience. That he ſhould have compaſſion on our infirmities; and when we become ſenſible of our errors, repent and amend our lives; that he ſhould then extend his mercy to pardon us, is likewiſe agreeable to the idea I have of his divine mercy. That through Jeſus Chriſt we have a plain and juſt explanation of the duties God requires of man, and a true information of the terms, on which we are to expect forgiveneſs if we treſpaſs, the which, if we do not accept of, or alledge we are unable to conform to; his example, who (by being one of ourſelves) was encompaſſed with the like infirmities, and in all points tempted like as we are, will, by his proved obedience and conformity, condemn us: This, my reaſon obliges me to believe. That to take from mankind all excuſe, God hath appointed this man *Jeſus* to be our judge, on that great day of trial, who, from his knowledge of human frailty, and his experience of the force of temptation, will have compaſſion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way, wherein to excuſe and whereon to inflict puniſhment, raiſes in my mind the higheſt idea of divine juſtice and mercy joined together. Heb. 11. v. 17. *For in all things, it behoved him to be made like unto his brethern, that he might be a merciful and faithful high prieſt, in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the ſins of the people;*

ple; for in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour those that are tempted. And chap. 5. *For every high priest taken from among men, is ordained for men, in things pertaining to God; that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins; who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way, for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity, and by reason hereof, he ought, as for the people, so also for himself to offer for sins; and no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as Aaron was: so also Christ glorified not himself, to be made an high priest, but he that said unto him,* " Thou art my son this day have I begot-" ten thee," *who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto him who was able to save him from death, and was heard, in that he feared; though he were a son, yet learned he obedience, by the things which he suffered: and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all that obey him.* And chap. 1, v. 9, *Thou has loved righteousness and hated iniquity, therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed* thee *with the oil of gladness, above* thy fellows. To the Ephesians he saith, (chap. 1) *wherefore I cease not to give thanks for you in my prayers—that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, may give you the spirit of wisdom, in the knowledge of him, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Jesus Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him on his own right hand in heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come, and hath put all things under his feet; and gave him to be the head over all things to the church.*

I am therefore convinced of the truth of what St. Paul says, when he tells us, *That God hath appointed a day,*

a day, on which he will judge the world in righteouſneſs by that man whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given aſſurance unto all men, in that he hath raiſed him from the dead.

As to the moral obligations, which the Chriſtian religion requires, I believe they may be all comprehended in theſe three. Let us obſerve truth and innocence before God, benevolence and mercy towards our neighbours, and juſtice and fortitude as members of ſociety. I believe that he, whoſe conduct in life, comes neareſt to a ſtrict obſervance of theſe, will be neareſt to mercy at the day of judgment.

CHAP.

CHAPTER XIII.

Of the DOCTRINE *of the* CHURCH.

IN the foregoing chapter I have declared what my faith is, and I am convinced, it is the faith recommended to me, by him who is to be my future judge: and that whatever a man ſoweth, that will he alſo reap: my reaſon is no where ſtretched to believe this. This ſyſtem is ſimple and eaſy to be underſtood: but the church has condemned it, and in its place has ſubſtituted another; one incomprehenſible, unintelligible, and inconſiſtent with human underſtanding: for they tell us, that God has been deficient in his information to the human mind, but that they have found out another faith, which they call *myſtery*, or a belief beyond the capacity of the human mind to conceive, the which nevertheleſs if we do not believe, we cannot be ſaved. I cannot form, in my mind, an idea of God, without conceiving, at the ſame time an idea of juſtice. I cannot conceive, he would require of man a belief of any thing, which he has not endowed him with powers to conceive: This new faith I cannot conceive, I am therefore convinced, he will not require the belief of it as a duty in me. I am told by the prophets, that at the latter times, there will be a great deflection from the truth: And when I conſider what the prophet *Daniel* muſt mean, when he tells us of the little horn, which, in his viſion, was to riſe, on the declenſion of the fourth empire; What Paul to the Theſſalonians tells us of the *man of ſin*; what the deſcription of the *woman*, (the emblem of error) in the Revelation means, whoſe reſidence was the great city built on ſeven hills, full of blaſphemy, perſecution and cruelty, who was drunk with the blood of the ſaints,

and

and made traffick of the ſouls of men; on whoſe forehead was wrote *myſtery, the mother of abominations*; and compare thoſe to the canons and diſcipline of the church at the latter end of the 15th century; I am convinced that the prophecy is fulfilled.

The ſeat of error, ſpoken of by St. John, was to be that great city built on ſeven hills, which ruleth over the kings of the earth; whoſe dominion was to be ſupported by a great deluſion, which God would ſend, on account of the wickedneſs of men; the which ſhould induce them to believe a lie. *Rome* was this great city built on ſeven hills, by which the world was conquered, and long kept in ſlavery. The dominion of error is there repreſented by two beaſts, Revelations, chap. xiii. *I ſaw a great beaſt riſe out of the ſea, having ſeven heads and ten horns; and on his heads was the name of blaſphemy; and the dragon gave him his power and his throne, and great authority: and power was given him, to make war with the ſaints, and to overcome them; and power was given him over every tongue, and over every kindred and nation. And I ſaw, as it were one of his heads wounded to death; but his deadly wound was healed; and all the world wondered, and followed the beaſt; and they worſhipped the dragon who gave power to the beaſt, whoſe deadly wound was healed; and I beheld another beaſt come out of the earth, which had two horns like the Lamb, but he ſpoke like the Dragon, and did all that the firſt beaſt could do before him; he cauſed the earth and them that dwell therein, to worſhip the firſt beaſt, whoſe deadly wound was healed; and he deceived them by ſigns, which were permitted him to do; and he made all both rich and poor, ſmall and great, free and bond to receive a mark, ſo that no man might buy or ſell who had not that mark; and cauſed that they, who would not worſhip the image of the beaſt ſhould be killed.*

Rome

Rome had conquered and long governed the world by military power. Pride, rapine and ambition, were the motives which inſtigated it, to this univerſal invaſion of the natural rights of mankind. Their emperors ſet themſelves up as gods; they perſecuted and put to death, all who denied them this worſhip, or worſhipped the living and true God. But when the empire, diſtracted by civil wars, was invaded; and Rome plundered by the Barbarians, and the ſeat of the Empire removed from it, no man could imagine that this great city would recover its ancient glory and power: It ſeemed *wounded to death*. But at this time the deluſion ſpoken of by Paul took place: the greateſt and moſt univerſal ignorance began, that ever darkened the human underſtanding, and continued to keep the mind in ſlavery for above a thouſand years. It was then that the ſecond beaſt made its appearance, which had two horns like the Lamb. Rome became the ſeat of the eccleſiaſtical empire, and acquired a dominion more extenſive, than it had poſſeſſed by the military power of its former empire: it did all that the firſt beaſt did before it. The pretext of its exerciſing this dominion and power, was the religion of Chriſt; it is therefore ſaid to have had *two horns like the Lamb*: but the means uſed to acquire this dominion, were the ſame, as were uſed by the Romans, in their univerſal invaſion of the liberties of mankind. Pride, and ambition of worldly grandeur, made it uſe all the arts of fraud to deceive, and force to compel mankind, to be ſubject to its will. It ſucceeded, and that deluſion took place, for no one was allowed to buy or ſell, who did not acknowledge it's authority: and wherever any one was diſcovered, who diſallowed it, he was killed; and it maintained its power ſo long, as this ignorance, or ſtrong deluſion kept the human mind in ſubjection. But at laſt the impudence of its orders, and filthineſs

of its abominations, firſt provoked men to enquire into, and afterwards doubt of the claim it aſſumed to this unlimited, and univerſal authority. Were reaſon only to preſide, and direct the human mind, very little authority would remain to the church. The Proteſtant clergy in Holland, very candidly acknowledged this, when, in their addreſs to the ſtates to aboliſh the tenets, and proſcribe the followers of Fauſtus Socinus, they ſaid *that theſe hereticks were the moſt dangerous enemies the church could have; for they taught a doctrine not above the reach of reaſon.* This reaſſumption of reaſon, aſſiſted by the convenience of printing (then invented) made ſeveral countries diſſent from the more groſs errors of Popery; but as the minds of men had been long immerſed in ignorance, and habituated to error, they could not at once throw off all their prejudices; they departed from the church, only in thoſe very groſs articles, which appeared more immediately repugnant to conſcience, to reaſon, and the evident and plain meaning of the precepts of Chriſt laid down in the New Teſtament; which now, in defiance of the church, and in neglect of its cenſures, men preſumed to examine themſelves, and judge of by reaſon. But they ſtill retained in their faith, that there was that myſtery in the religion of Chriſt, which human reaſon neither was, nor could be a judge of; and the clergy, who, at this juncture, found they could not retain all their power, endeavoured to preſerve as much of it as they were able, while reflection and learning were yet in their infancy. They got it eſtabliſhed by law, in thoſe countries which had diſſented from the church of Rome, that at leaſt, the ſyſtem of faith eſtabliſhed by the council of Nice, ſhould be ſtill retained and believed, under the penalty to be inflicted on blaſphemy and hereſy; and that neither *the law of liberty, by which we are to be judged,*

ed, nor the directions given, that *every man ought to be convinced in his own mind*, ſhould be allowed as any excuſe, or alledged as reaſons, ſufficient to differ from it.

The council of Nice had decreed that the Divine Being ſhould be compoſed of three perſons, *the Father*, *the Son*, *and the Holy Ghoſt*, each diſtinct from the other, and each ſeparately to be God eternal; and yet, *that they ſhould not*; for that the three together ſhould make but one God: that the ſecond perſon was begotten by the firſt, and that the third proceeded from the other two; and yet *that they did not*; for all the three were co-eternal, which can admit neither of begetting, nor proceeding. But that this, nevertheleſs, ſhould be the true Catholick faith; the which if a man does not believe, they declare and ordain, that he neither can, nor ſhall be ſaved. This ſyſtem of belief (conceived by this council and impoſed on mankind) is beyond human conception, and of conſequence beyond human belief; for the mind impoſes on itſelf, which pretends to believe that, which it cannot conceive. All the parts of a regular ſyſtem are built on an equal authority; for the truth of the whole muſt depend on the connection of its parts: but if any part of a ſyſtem claſhes, or diſagrees with another, this claſhing or ſeeming contradiction muſt be removed, before the mind can comprehend, either what that is, or how the ſyſtem propoſed, is to be conceived, before it can be believed. Belief is the perſuaſion of a truth: In truth there is that harmony in the circumſtances of the thing narrated, which will not allow of the leaſt jarring, much leſs of a contradiction. In our common courts of juſtice, there is not any other method to find out the truth, and to diſtinguiſh it from falſehood, but by a careful examination, whether there is that perfect harmony in the circumſtances of the thing narrated, which

always attends truth; and if we find there is this harmony, we conclude, that what is narrated may be true; but if we find, that there is not this harmony, we conclude, that what is aſſerted to be true, muſt be falſe; from this plain principle, that truth muſt be always conſiſtent with itſelf. In examining the truth of this creed, I ſhall confine my enquiry to this one propoſition, whether Jeſus Chriſt (the ſecond perſon in the Trinity) is, from the evidence I have any opportunity to examine, to be thought God from all eternity, co-equal with the Father. As they, who aſſert he is, have excluded common reaſon from being a witneſs on this occaſion, I ſhall confine myſelf to that evidence which they allow of, viz. The Bible.

They allow that he is the Meſſiah propheſied of, in the Old Teſtament: and if what is foretold of the Meſſiah by the Prophets; if what is related in the Evangeliſts of the life and doctrine of Chriſt; if what is afterwards ſaid by the Apoſtles, in their different letters to the primitive chriſtians; if all theſe evidences concur, in the teſtimony of his being God from all eternity, co-eval with, and equal to the Father; then the decree of the council of Nice may be true. But if, on examination, there ſhall appear to be a want of harmony, or an evident diſagreement, either between what is propheſied of the Meſſiah, or related by the Evangeliſts and Apoſtles, of his life and doctrine, and this ordinance given out by the council of Nice; then their determination, I conclude, muſt be wrong, and their aſſertion falſe; or that he may not be God eternal, co-eval and equal with the Father. The Apoſtle Paul tells us, that every man ſhould be convinced in his own mind: theſe differences muſt therefore be removed, and this harmony take place, which always attends truth, before I can believe that this, or any other creed can be true, which I am directed to believe by any human authority. In the

prophecies,

prophecies where the promiſed Meſſiah is deſcribed, he is ſaid not only to be given as an inſtructer, but likewiſe as an enſign to the people, an example to point out and ſhew, that theſe ordinances of God, which he had declared, may, and ought to be obſerved by men; as one who, from the womb, ſhould be endowed with the fear of God; one, who, being perſecuted and put to death by thoſe whom he came to inſtruct, ſhould in all his temptations and ſufferings, ſtill preſerve his integrity; one, whoſe exact conformity to the Divine will, ſhould procure him ſuch favour with God, as to conſtitute him a judge of mankind. "The Lord hath called me from the womb and ſaid "unto me, thou art my ſervant, in whom I ſhall be "glorified. And now ſaith the Lord, who hath "formed me from the womb, altho' Iſrael be not "gathered, yet ſhall I be glorious in the eyes of the "Lord; he has given me the tongue of the learned, "that I might know how to ſpeak a word in ſeaſon "to him that is weary; he has opened mine ears. "Thus ſaith the Lord, to him whom man deſpiſeth, "in an acceptable time have I heard thee, in the "day of ſalvation have I helped thee; I will preſerve "thee and give thee for a covenant to the people." It cannot be imagined that the Almighty God ſpeaketh thus of himſelf. *Thou art my ſervant*: here is evidently the picture of one, who, from his birth, ſhould be held forth as an example to the world; who would teach and ſhew mankind what manner of man he muſt be, in whom the Lord delighteth; one, on whom, (being endowed with the fear of the Lord) the ſpirit of truth, wiſdom and perſuaſion ſhould be conferred: here a man is ſpoken of, who was to exiſt in future times, in the common courſe of nature; whom, on account of his righteouſneſs as a ſervant, God would exalt above his brethren. But this deſcription is not applicable to one above human capa-

city, and much leſs to God himſelf. " *He has given me the tongue of the learned,*" ſuppoſes an endowment conferred on, and not inherent in the perſon who poſſeſſes it. It was from the merits of the Meſſiah, that God delighted in him; it was on account of his ſuperior merit, that the Almighty ſays, *I will ſtrengthen him with thy girdle and cloath him with thy robe, and commit thy government into his hand*: Surely the Almighty ſpeaks of one different from himſelf in this deſcription. If the favour of God was conferred on the Meſſiah from his merit; merit is a quality not applicable to God, he is above merit; no being can have merit in acting conformable to its own will. Merit is an inferior virtue, and only applicable to men, who, from the love of God, live in conformity to his ordinances, and imitate theſe his attributes, wherein he is imitable by men. That Being, at whoſe command all creatures exiſt, what he wills is juſtice, and muſt have an equal regard to all his works; his favour muſt ariſe afterwards from the behaviour of men themſelves: he endowed them with a capacity of judging for themſelves; he told them the conſequences of obedience and diſobedience, and left them to the freedom of their own will, to chuſe whether they would obey or not: Their merit conſiſts in their obedience to thoſe laws, which God has made known to them. In this light, Paul ſpeaking of Jeſus ſays, " He took not on him the form," (or as I underſtand it, was not appointed in the capacity) " of an angel; " but was in all things made like unto his brethren, " that he might be an example to men:" which could not be, had he been endowed as an angel. In this light alſo, St. Paul ſpeaks of Jeſus Chriſt, as one who attained to his glory, through his merit. He gives him as an example for men to endure with patience, whatever perſecutions, whatever afflictions

may

may befall them: He ſays, "Let us run with patience "the race that is ſet before us, looking on Jeſus as "the author and finiſher of our faith; who *for the* "*joy that was ſet before him*, endured the croſs and "deſpiſed the ſhame, and is now ſet down at the "right hand of God." And in this ſame light Jeſus ſpeaks of himſelf after his reſurrection, "*Ought not* "*the Chriſt to have ſuffered theſe things, that he might* "*enter into his glory.*" Here is plainly intimated the motive for his patience, in his enduring the croſs and deſpiſing the ſhame, viz. the proſpect of reward, that joy that was ſet before him, for, or on account of his reſignation to the will of his father. He is therefore given, by Paul, as an example to be conſtantly before us, why we ſhould ſuffer all kind of perſecution, rather than quit our faith in the goſpel of Chriſt. But I cannot reconcile theſe words of Paul to the council of Nice, or how the proſpect of reward, ſhould induce the Almighty God, to ſuffer either pain or ſhame, on account of any future joy, to be acquired by theſe his ſufferings from men; for I cannot believe that the happineſs of God can at all depend on the actions of men. Thus Elihu ſays to Job, "*If thou ſinneſt, what doſt thou againſt him? or if thou be righteous, what receiveth he of thine hand?*

It ſeems evident from this, that either Paul, or the council of Nice muſt be miſtaken; and which is ſo, let common reaſon and unbiaſſed judgment determine. From theſe reaſons, it ſeems, that the Meſſiah, promiſed by this deſcription (altho' quite applicable to Jeſus Chriſt) could not be God himſelf, but a real man to be preſented to the world, whoſe doctrine and example ſhould ſave or condemn mankind; and therefore was a proper judge to try them: And if Chriſt was the Meſſiah promiſed, this deſcription of the Meſſiah is no way conformable to the Nicean creed.

To convey inſtruction by methaphor or allegory is uſed by all the prophets; but more eſpecially by Chriſt. An allegory is defined by Logicians. *Figura quâ aliud dicitur, aliud intelligitur;* or where the purport of one idea is expreſſed by words which properly belong to another compared to it. Mankind, in the ſcriptures, are divided into two claſſes, the ſons of God and the ſons of the devil. Here the relation between God and good men, and between the devil and wicked men, is, from their different diſpoſitions, made ſimilar, or compared to that corporeal relation between parent and child, Jeſus ſaid, *if God was your father, ye would love me, for I came from God; but ye are of your father the devil, amd the luſts of your father you will do.* And St. John ſays, *whoſoever believeth that* JESUS *is the* CHRIST, *is born of* GOD; *and that whoſoever heard his word and did it, ſhould be adopted of* GOD; *for to as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the ſons of* GOD, viz. *to them who believe in his name*; and that the children (thus adopted) were born, not by blood, nor by the will of the fleſh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

When we would expreſs the deſires or actions of the Almighty, we can do it in no other terms, than by uſing the ſame phraſes, which men uſe to one another, as, *thus ſaith the Lord—the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me—every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.——When God ſaw the wickedneſs of man, it repented God, that he had made man—it grieved him at his heart.——The Lord ſmelled a ſweet ſavour—the Lord ſaid in his heart.* In the interpretation of theſe paſſages, I believe no man is ſo abſurd in his conceptions, as to imagine, that the Almighty Being muſt be endowed with theſe bodily organs, tongue, noſe, ears, eyes, or heart, to enable him to ſpeak, ſmell, hear, ſee, or conceive;

or

or that it was neceſſary, that he ſhould make uſe of language (ſounds applied to the ears of the prophets) when he communicated his orders to them; but only that he affected the minds of thoſe prophets in ſuch a manner, as to let them know, what he required they ſhould declare to the people in his name: this was called the Divine Spirit, or Holy Ghoſt inſpiring them. The means or mode uſed by men to expreſs their will to one another, is by ſpeech or words; and when we apply this ſame intention to God Almighty, to ſignify the declaration of his will to men, we muſt do it by the ſame phraſes; we call it his word. There is not an expreſſion more commonly uſed in the Bible, to ſignify the declaration of the will of God, than by calling it his word. The firſt chapter of St. John's goſpel is full of theſe figurative expreſſions. This chapter is alledged particularly, by the church as a proof, to ſupport the determination of the council of Nice. For, as the other paragraph in his epiſtles, in the 7th verſe of the laſt chapter, is generally allowed to be a ſpurious interpolation, committed ſome centuries after St. John's death, I ſhall therefore take no notice of it. To explain this chapter according to the uſual meaning applied to ſuch expreſſions throughout the New Teſtament, I muſt underſtand the *word* (Λογος) to mean the decrees, or orders given by the Almighty from the beginning; by Life, is meant the ſtate of happineſs enjoyed with God; by Light is meant the knowledge of the will of God; and by Darkneſs that perverſeneſs, from pride, ſenſual luſt and worldly deſires, which hinders the wicked from enquiring into, or conforming to the divine will. Here, not only the *word*, but *light*, *life* and *darkneſs* are figurative expreſſions. I can eaſily conceive that when the divine decree gave exiſtence to the world and every thing that was made, that he communicated to man thoſe laws, by obeying which, he

he ſhould inherit eternal life and happineſs with him; and I can alſo conceive, that the wicked or perverſe did not pay obedience to thoſe laws. And in the 14th verſe, when he ſays, *the word was made fleſh and dwelt among us.* I explain it thus,—that God had raiſed up the man *Jeſus*, to whom he had communicated thoſe laws, in an explicit manner, to which he required obedience; who had accordingly, thro' grace and truth, declared to mankind, whatever he had received of the Father, in obedience to his will: as, where he ſays, "If ye keep my commandments "ye ſhall abide in my love; even as I have kept my "Father's commandments and abide in his love: for "all things which I have heard of my father, have I "made known to you." The merit of Jeſus, as he here declares himſelf, conſiſted, in that he had kept his Father's commandments; he therefore abode in his love; and deſires them to follow his example, if they would abide in his love.

I ſhall next enquire whether the life, the actions and doctrine of Jeſus Chriſt, as recorded to us in the New Teſtament, be agreeable to this creed.—The firſt circumſtance ſpoken of in his hiſtory, given by the Evangeliſts, is his immaculate conception; that he was not the ſon of man, but conceived by the Holy Ghoſt, in the womb of a virgin. Whether this was, or was not ſo, no way concerns my ſalvation: it is a piece of hiſtory I am at liberty to believe or not; but that it was ſo, in order to fulfill that prophecy of Iſaiah, "A virgin ſhould bring forth a ſon, and he "ſhould be called Immanuel," ſeems not to be well conſidered by the Evangeliſt; for the prophecy this alludes to, concerns one Maher-Shalal-haſh-baz, who in the reign of Ahaz king of Juda, was born of the propheteſs, and was given as a ſign to Ahaz, to convince him (who was then threatened with an invaſion from the united forces of Reſin, king of Damaſcus, and

Pekin

Pekin king of Samaria) that before that child, thus born of a virgin, ſhould attain the age to diſtinguiſh his right hand from his left, theſe kings he was afraid of, ſhould be diveſted of their own kingdoms, by the king of Aſſyria; which accordingly came to paſs: So that this prophecy has nothing to do with the birth of the Meſſiah, of whom it is conſtantly aſſerted, that he muſt ſpring from, and be a deſcendant of Jeſſe. The two Evangeliſts, Mathew and Luke, give different accounts of the lineage of Joſeph, the huſband of Mary; one ſays, he was deſcended from David in the royal, and the other, that he was deſcended from David in a collateral line: and then ſay, that Jeſus was not the ſon of Joſeph at all. So that the lineage they record, gives us no proof, that he was the Meſſiah promiſed, who was to ſpring from Jeſſe. I ſhall therefore paſs over the birth of Jeſus, as a circumſtance no way relative to my faith as a chriſtian.

When Jeſus was thirty years of age, he then entered into his miniſtry, by declaring that he was a meſſenger from God, to ſhew forth his will, and point out to man the way of ſalvation; that he came to declare to man, not his own will, but the will of him who ſent him. An ambaſſador or meſſenger, who comes to deliver the will of another, is to be conſidered in two capacities, viz. in a public one, as reſpecting the perſon who ſends him; and in a private one, as reſpecting himſelf. In his public capacity, he is to ſhow his credentials, that he has proper authority from him who ſent him, and is no impoſtor: and when his credentials are allowed to be juſt, then what he declares, in the name of him who ſent him, is to be received, as if he who ſent him, had ſpoken it himſelf. Whether Jeſus acted as God himſelf, or only as a meſſenger from God, is what I am to enquire into.

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The people whom Jeſus came to inſtruct, were the Jews; their religion they had from Moſes. Miracles were the teſtimony of Moſes, (or were his credentials) whereby the Iſraelites believed he was commiſſioned from God, to deliver them from the ſlavery of the Egyptians. He then preſcribed them the law, which taught them their duty both to God and man; but they had perverted the meaning of the law, and by neglecting the moral, or weightier parts of it, had placed all divine worſhip in external actions, ſacrifices and ceremonies. When Jeſus declared his miſſion from God, to diſcloſe to mankind the terms of mercy, it was neceſſary to ſhow that he had the ſame power that Moſes had, to obtain equal credit from them: his miracles, to them were his credentials. If his authority was not from God, he could not perform thoſe things, which required a divine power to execute. Thus, in his anſwer to John the Baptiſt he ſays, "*tell John, that by me the blind receive ſight, the halt go, the lepers are cleanſed, the deaf hear, the dead are raiſed, and the poor have the Goſpel preached to them.*" In his public character, as a meſſenger from God, he ſpeaks as God who ſent him. In ſpeaking as God, he perſonates the attributes of God; it is by them only he can repreſent God. "*Sanctify them with thy truth; thy word is truth.*" Conſcious of his exact obedience, to that commiſſion given him to execute, he ſays, "*I am the truth, the way and the life—the light of the world—the door of the ſheepfold, thro' which all muſt enter, to obtain eternal life. I am the true vine, and my Father is the huſbandman.*" As repreſenting righteouſneſs and truth, he ſays, "*The Father and I are one.*" As he repreſents truth, and truth as the word of God, he ſays, "*Before Abraham was, I am.*" Truth is always the ſame from eternity to eternity: time, place or circumſtance make no variation in truth. Truth is that which

which is. Jeſus therefore perſonating truth, ſays, in the preſent tenſe, *before Abraham was, I am.* And in conſequence of his ſtrict conformity to the divine word or truth, he deſires he may be glorified, as he was with the Father before the world began, or from eternity. In theſe paſſages, he ſpeaks in his public character, as repreſenting the attributes of God. But that he only executed a commiſſion given him by God, may be proved by numberleſs texts in Scripture. "*I can do nothing of myſelf; but as the Father hath taught me, ſo ſpeak I thoſe things—the Father loved the Son, and hath ſhown him all things—he that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father who ſent him—the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son—as I hear I judge, and my judgment is juſt, becauſe I ſpeak not my own will, but the will of my Father who ſent me.*"

In his directions to his Diſciples, he ſays, "*He that heareth you, heareth me; and he who deſpiſeth you, depiſeth me; and he who deſpiſes me, deſpiſes him who ſent me.*" To the Phariſees he ſaith, "*He that believeth my words, believeth not in me,* (or becauſe I ſay it) *but in him who ſent me; for I have not ſpoken of myſelf; but the Father who hath ſent me, he gave me a commandment, what I ſhould ſay and what I ſhould ſpeak:*" And his conformity to this command was the cauſe of his Father's loving him. "*I am the good ſhepherd; I lay down my life for the ſheep. As the Father knoweth me, ſo know I the Father; therefore doth the Father love me. This commandment have I received of my Father, and his commandment is everlaſting life.*

The ſource and opportunity of all the extravagant errors, which have been introduced into chriſtianity, ariſes from an allowance not being made for the phraſeology uſed by Jeſus Chriſt. To judge properly of the meaning of any one, it is not the literal interpretation

terpretation of his words, or the ſubſtitution of an Engliſh word for a Greek one, but the idioms of that language he ſpeaks in, and the phraſeology he generally uſes, which enables us to conceive his meaning, and interpret it properly. His common manner of expreſſing himſelf is by parables or ſimilies, Ταῦτα ἐν παροιμίαις λελαληκα ὑμῖν. Theſe things have I ſpoken to you in ſimilies or parables. And Mark, chap. 4th. *With many ſuch parables, ſpake he the word to them. And without a parable ſpake he not to them.* By his phraſeology, the cauſes, means, or circumſtances, by which any thing is brought about, are made to perſonate the things themſelves. When he ſays, *I am the way and the life,—I am the reſurrection*; his meaning is, that to conform to the doctrine I preach, is the way to obtain life at the reſurrection. *I am the Bread which came down from Heaven;* means, that the doctrine I preach is from God; and if any man eat of this bread, or embrace this doctrine, he ſhall live for ever: "The bread which I give is my "fleſh, which I will give for the life of the world. Veri-"ly I ſay unto you, that except ye eat of the fleſh of "the ſon of man, and drink his blood, ye have no "life in you: for my fleſh is meat indeed, and my "blood is drink indeed." It is evident theſe words are to be underſtood in a figurative ſenſe, and not in the common acceptation of our language. He ſays "*It is the ſpirit which quickeneth, the fleſh profiteth nothing. The words which I ſpeak are ſpirit and life.*" In like manner, when he recommends to his Diſciples, to meet after his death, and to eat and drink in commemoration of him, that by their mutual converſation, they might preſerve his doctrine in their minds, and from his example, perſevere in it unto death. He ſays, "*this bread is my body and this wine is my blood.*" No unprejudiced perſon in his ſenſes, can imagine, he was then eating his own fleſh, and drinking

ing his own blood, according to the literal meaning, which theſe words bear in our language; or that his doing ſo, could contribute any thing to their edification. The utmoſt our mode of ſpeaking will allow of, is to perſonate qualities: With us, a new-born child may be called innocence itſelf, and an upright judge, juſtice itſelf: We mean by that phraſe, that they are incapable of acting contrary to innocence or juſtice. And when Jeſus ſays, I am the truth; it ſignifies, I am incapable of ſaying what is not truth. But our phraſeology will go no farther. When Jeſus ſays *I am the way to eternal life,—I am the door through which you muſt enter—I am the light to ſhow you the way*,—I can eaſily comprehend his meaning, becauſe it is conformable to that mode of ſpeaking, he conſtantly uſes. But for us to call a perſon the way, becauſe he ſhows the way; or to call a perſon a gate, becauſe he opens the gate; or becauſe he holds forth a lighted candle, he ſhould therefore be that lighted candle, would be expreſſions too excentric for our language. Yet ſuch are the abſurd meanings put upon the ſayings of our Saviour, and introduced as his doctrine. If we examine his doctrine, and explain the meaning of his ſayings, conformable to the phraſeology he conſtantly uſes, we ſhall find a ſameneſs throughout the whole ſyſtem; and nothing unintelligible or inconſiſtent, advanced by him: But if we interpret his words according to our modern mode of ſpeaking, and thence deduce his doctrine, we pervert his meaning, we confound our underſtanding, and miſlead our judgment. For what purpoſe this has been done by that council, muſt be left to be determined by that Being, whoſe juſtice and mercy will diſtinguiſh hypocriſy from ignorance; for if our judgment is miſled for want of ſufficient information, we have this ſtill to hope for, with St. John, *that if our our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God.*

Jeſus

Jeſus is called the Son of God; and St. John ſays, *every one that doth righteouſneſs is born of God*; and *that to whomſoever ſhould receive him, he gave power to become the Sons of God.*—Jeſus ſays, *they are called gods, to whom the word of God is given.* He as being more righteous than others, is called *the beloved Son of God*: as being the only man that lived and died without ſin, he is called *the only begotton Son of God.* The word of God, or law of righteouſneſs is called, both in the old and new Teſtament, the truth. (Pſalm, 119) "Thy righteouſneſs is an everlaſting righteouſneſs, and thy law is the truth: All thy commandments are truth." (Jerem. 10th) "The Lord is the God of truth." To call God the truth, is the neareſt repreſentation we can form of him. In the expreſſion of power given by the Almighty to Moſes, he calls himſelf, "I AM THAT I AM;" or, as the Septuagint has it, "*I am he that is: ſay, he that is, hath ſent you unto them.*" We can define truth by no better words, than by calling it *that which is.* Truth is an attribute inſeparable from the Divinity; the ſame from eternity to eternity. Jeſus addreſſing the Father, ſays, "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word "is truth: As thou haſt ſent me into the world, "even ſo ſend I them into the world, that they all "may be one, (or of one mind) as thou Father art "in me, and I in thee; *that they alſo may be one in "us.*" John the Baptiſt tells us, "that he whom "God hath ſent ſpeaketh the word of God; for "God hath not given the ſpirit by meaſure unto "him." This is the divine word, the ſpirit of truth, or law of righteouſneſs, which St. John ſpeaks of, in his firſt Chapter; which, was it rightly tranſlated, would be this, "In the beginning was the word, and "the word was with God, and God was the word. "This was, in the beginning with God; every thing

" thing was made by him, and without him was " nothing made, that is made. In him was Life, " and this Life was the Light of man." But our tranſlators have tranſpoſed the words, και Θεος ην ὁ λόγος, and God was the word: they have made it, *and the Word was* GOD; whereby the *word* is made a principle in itſelf, inſtead of an attribute of the Deity; whence a different meaning is conveyed to the mind from the words; and from this wrong interpretation men have drawn this inference, that the *Word* here ſpoken of, was a diſtinct perſon from God the Father, and that Jeſus Chriſt was this word or diſtinct perſon, by whom the world was made. *Truth, righteouſneſs*, and the *divine ſpirit* were from all eternity; and by the decree of God, every thing that is made, was made. But God confers this divine ſpirit on whom, and in what proportion he wills; this was the caſe of the other prophets; as when he ſays to Moſes, *Behold I have made thee a God to Pharoah.* To Jeſus, it was given in an extraordinary degree; it was conferred on him without meaſure; but it doth no ways follow, becauſe the divine ſpirit or word of God, was from the beginning, that therefore Jeſus Chriſt, on whom it was conferred, ſhould alſo be from the beginning, any more than Moſes and the other prophets were. In explaining the parable of the ſower, he ſays, *The Sower ſowed the word, which proſpered according to the Ground it was ſown on:* He tells his diſciples, that the Sower is the Preacher, and the Word is the Doctrine he taught, (that law of righteouſneſs which was from the beginning) and the ground it was ſown on, was the minds of the hearers, which proſpered according to the diſpoſition of them who received it. Common ſenſe will not admit that what is called *the word*, ſhould ſignify both the ſower and the ſeed ſown. Paul telling what is meant by faith, ſays, " *By faith we believe*

" *that the World was made by the Word of* GOD." The natural meaning which theſe words preſent to us, is, that the world was made by the Almighty FIAT, —*Be, and it was*, and not by any intermediate agent. But this is made more clear by the teſtimony of Chriſt himſelf, (John V. 26.) *For as the* FATHER *hath Life in himſelf, ſo hath he given to the* SON *to have Life in himſelf, and hath given him authority alſo to execute judgment, becauſe he is the Son of Man,* ὅτι υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου ἐστί. Here his being the ſon of man is the cauſe that this authority is conferred on him. He was conſtituted a judge, becauſe *He*, altho' the ſon of man, had yet conformed to the will of the Father; and therefore that power, that life or righteouſneſs, inherent in God, was conferred on him by God. But if John means, in the firſt chapter, according to the received acceptation of the words, *that the world was made by Jeſus Chriſt*, the power to execute judgment would have been conferred on him, not becauſe he was the ſon of man, but becauſe he was the maker of the world, and father of all created beings; and had therefore not only a power, but a right to judge his own creatures. I can ſee no other conſtruction that can be put on theſe words of Jeſus, or that any other inference can be drawn from them, which can admit of the meaning aſſigned them by the council of Nice. I am fully convinced that Chriſt was a better judge of his own meaning than they were: and the words, καὶ ὁ κοσμος δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο may be more properly tranſlated, *the world was made*, δι αὐτὸ *propter ipſum*, on account of him, than *per ipſum*, by *him*; for the world was certainly made, that man ſhould be righteous. This is a ſenſe much more agreeable to theſe dark expreſſions of the Evangeliſt. And in this ſenſe, *he came to his own, but his own received him not*, will admit of a very eaſy and natural explanation. And theſe, *In him was Life, and this Life*

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was the Light of Man, are of the ſame ſignification with our Saviour's, *For as the* FATHER *hath life in himſelf, ſo hath he given to the* SON *to have life in himſelf.*

The ſame Apoſtle John introduces our Saviour in the Revelations, declaring himſelf in theſe words, *To him who overcometh, will I grant to ſit with me, on my throne; even as I alſo overcame, and am ſat down with my Father on his throne. He that hath an ear let him hear.* This laſt injunction, *He that hath an ear let him hear*, is a reference to our judgment: and my judgment can interpret theſe words in no other manner, than, that to him who overcometh all temptation, will I beſtow the happineſs of ſitting with me on my throne; for the ſame reaſon, or on the ſame account, as I, who overcame every temptation, am therefore now ſat down with my Father on his throne. Here the merit of Chriſt, as a man, is given as the ſole cauſe of his promotion to that dignity, of ſitting on the throne along with God; ſo that if he had not been tempted and overcome all temptation, he would not have ſat along with God on his throne; and that the attaining to that dignity, was not the cauſe, but the conſequence of his conforming to the divine will.

I ſhall next conſider our Saviour in his private capacity, abſtracted from his public character: not as a meſſenger ſent to deliver the will of another, but as a man ſubject to thoſe alterations of mind, and bodily feelings, which a man only can be ſubject to. It is wrote, *that the child* JESUS *grew, and waxed ſtrong in ſpirit. He was filled with wiſdom, and the grace of* GOD *was upon him.* And again, *The* CHILD *grew, and increaſed in wiſdom and ſtature, and in favour with* GOD *and* MAN. An increaſe of wiſdom with ſtature, and an increaſe of favour with God and man as he increaſed in years, ſhew the progreſs of

wiſdom in the human mind. But this deſcription is no way applicable to the Divinity, or even to an Angel or pre-exiſtent Spirit, the very ſuppoſition of whoſe pre-exiſtence, would preclude any increaſe of knowledge; as their pre-knowledge, or experience would make them ſuperior to improvement, by growing into manhood. Jeſus, before he atttained to that manhood, which brings judgment to maturity, was aſſailed by thoſe vain imaginations, which preſent themſelves to the minds of youth; but he repels them by reflecting, that man ſhould worſhip or pay his ſole regard and adoration to the Lord his God, and ſerve him only; he therefore gave up all thought of acquiring human greatneſs, and reflection confirms him in this; and he throws off all ſuch thoughts. *So the devil left him, and angels came and miniſtered unto him.* But theſe temptations would be too trivial, to preſent themſelves to a mind ſuperior, and pre-exiſtent to humanity, whoſe judgment and memory muſt make it know the ſmall continuance of worldly grandeur, and how little ſuch an enjoyment could be put in competition with diſobedience to that Being, through whom it enjoyed exiſtence, and by whom, in a ſhort time it muſt be judged. To ſuch Beings, ſuch a ſuggeſtion could be no temptation, nor the reſiſting it any merit.

Jeſus did not begin his miniſtry, until he had attained to thoſe years which bring the human mind to its greateſt ſtrength: whereas the mind of God or of an Angel would be equally capable to declare itſelf perfectly, from the time it began to expreſs itſelf. But Jeſus Chriſt is declared not to be ſuch: He, from his infancy, gradually increaſed in wiſdom, and in favour with God and Man; he was, as the firſt man, made a little lower than the angels; he did not begin his inſtructions, until length of time and maturity of judgment, had brought his mind to

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its utmoſt ſtrength; and is, therefore generally placed as a contraſt to the firſt man Adam. Thus St. Paul to the Hebrews ſays, *But we ſee Jeſus made a little lower than the Angels* Βραχύ τι παρ' ἀγγέλους ἠλαττωμένον, who on account of his ſufferings, *is now crowned with glory and honour.* The firſt man was made a little lower than the Angels, but falling from his obedience, he became ſubject to death; but Jeſus made, in like manner, a little lower than the Angels, preſerved his obedience; he withſtood all temptations and ſufferings even unto death; he therefore roſe, or threw off the ſtate of death, and, in conſideration of what he had ſuffered for his ſtrict adherence to the will of the Father, he is now crowned with glory and honour. And to the Corinthians he ſays, *Since by man came death, by man came alſo reſurrection from death; for as in Adam all die, ſo in Chriſt ſhall all men be made alive; but every man in his proper order, Chriſt the firſt, and afterwards they who are Chriſt's.* As Chriſt was the meſſenger of God, all the inſtructions given by him, are to be looked on as given by God: but in things that do not concern him as a meſſenger, he declares his inability to determine. When the mother of Zebedee's children requeſts, that her two ſons might ſit, one on his right hand and the other on his left, in his kingdom; he declares that what ſhe aſks was not in his power to grant (οὐκ ἔστιν ἐμὸν δοῦναι) but that the Father would beſtow thoſe places on whom he judged proper. And concerning the end of the world and day of judgment, he ſays, *Of that day and hour knoweth no man:* It was not given to any creature to know; *no, not to the Angels in Heaven, nor to the Son*; it was known to the Father only. Had the world been created and all things made by the Son, it is preſumeable, that the Son would have alſo known when it was to be at an end; or rather, when he would chooſe it ſhould be at an end.

The Apoſtle Peter in many inſtances, ſeems to have been actuated more by zeal than knowledge; and his zeal deceived his maſter: for when Jeſus aſked the twelve, whom the world ſaid, and they thought he was, Peter anſwered, "*thou art the Chriſt the Son of the living God: Then Jeſus ſaid, bleſſed art thou Simon Barjona, for fleſh and blood hath not revealed this to thee, but my Father which is in Heaven. I ſay unto thee, thou art Peter, and upon this Rock will I build my Church, and the gates of Hell ſhall not prevail againſt it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, and whomſoever thou ſhalt bind on Earth, ſhall be bound in Heaven.*" But he was miſtaken in Peter's knowledge of him, who, it is evident, had no right conception, either of what the Chriſt was to be, or to undergo on Earth. For when Jeſus told his Diſciples immediately afterwards, what he, as the Chriſt, muſt undergo according to the Prophets: that on his coming to Jeruſalem, he ſhould be taken up by the elders, the chief Prieſts and Scribes; and that he was to be judged and put to death by them, Peter was ſo ſhocked, at hearing him expreſs himſelf ſo different from what his thoughts of the Chriſt were, and ſo oppoſite to what his expectations were, that he rebuked him for ſaying ſo; "*Mercy to thee, Lord! theſe things cannot befall thee:*" For Peter, as well as the other Diſciples, imagined the promiſed Chriſt was to be a temporal Prince; who was to reſtore the Kingdom to the houſe of David. On which, Jeſus finding Peter to have an idea of the Meſſiah or Chriſt, very different from what he conceived he had, when he promiſed him theſe powers, he turned to him both in ſurprize and anger, ſaying, "*get thee behind me Satan, thou art a ſcandal to me, for thou conceiveſt not the things which are of God, but thoſe that are of men.*" It ſeems by this that the knowledge of Jeſus being the Chriſt,

had

had not been revealed to him, by the Father; neither had he formed his idea of Chriſt from the Prophets; for he was ignorant, both of what the office and the ſufferings of the Chriſt were to be. Jeſus, at firſt, thought he had a right conception of him, and muſt have attained to it, by a revelation from the Father, and therefore gave him thoſe extraordinary powers of binding and looſening; but when, by the rebuke of Peter, Jeſus found he was miſtaken in his thoughts of him, he calls him the *Devil, and that he was a ſcandal to him.* It cannot be imagined that theſe very extenſive powers could be given to one, whom he afterwards compares to the Devil, and who was a ſcandal to the doctrine he profeſſed to teach, as having no conception of heavenly things. Here Jeſus judged as a man and was deceived as a man.

The next remaining inſtance of our Saviour's acting in a private character, is in his ſufferings at his death: he knew that according to what was foretold of the Meſſiah, he muſt be put to death by the Jews. He had told his Diſciples, that to fulfill the prophecies, that circumſtance muſt happen him; but that he ſhould riſe from death the third day, and would ſhew himſelf to them after his reſurrection, and acquainted them of the place he ſhould then meet them in, viz. in Galilee. Yet when the hour approached, his reſolution failed him, and he prays moſt fervently, that he might not ſuffer; *My ſoul is troubled even unto death, and what ſhall I ſay? Father ſave me from this hour.* But on reflection he reconciles his mind to the thoughts of it, ſaying, *But for this cauſe have I come to this hour.* Yet upon the nearer approach of death, he ſtill ſollicits God, that he ſhould not ſuffer, *Oh! my Father, if it be poſſible, let this cup depart from me. All things are poſſible with thee, take away this cup.* Under theſe agonies of mind, he is ſaid to be ſupported by

a ſpecial meſſenger from God, Luke, xxii. *And there appeared unto him an Angel from Heaven ſtrengthening him; and being in agony, he prayed more earneſtly; and his ſweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.* But as his moſt earneſt prayer could not obtain this of the Father, he ſeems to have thought, that as the Father had refuſed, ſo he had alſo forſaken him, and exclaims at the croſs, *My God, my God! why haſt thou forſaken me.* Let us review this a little: Our Saviour had the full aſſurance, that he the Meſſiah would, on death, be quickly transformed into that happy ſtate, where an end ſhould be put to all his ſufferings, to all his cares and the perſecutions of wicked men; ſtill this aſſurance did not diveſt him of that human frailty, the terror attending death; yet, altho' this ſenſibility made him earneſtly pray to ſhun it, his righteouſneſs and reſignation to the will of God, hindered him from making uſe of any other effort, than prayers to avoid it, *yet not my will but thine be done.* Had Jeſus been inſenſible of, or had deſpiſed the terrors of death, he would have been no example to ſuch, who, by natural conſtitution, are endued with that timidity of mind, which ſhocks them at the approach of it, and which they cannot help. But his ſtruggles, at that period, and his reſignation, when he found it could not be avoided, takes from men all excuſe, for uſing any other means to avoid death, than a calm reſignation to the will of God, when, through the wickedneſs of perſecutors, a perſeverance in their uprightneſs is the cauſe of their ſuffering.

Jeſus Chriſt our Saviour had all the feelings of a man; or as St. Paul ſays of him, (Heb. 5th) *He was one who can have compaſſion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himſelf was compaſſed with infirmities; and by reaſon hereof he ought, as for the people, ſo alſo for himſelf*

himſelf to offer for ſins. Thus his laſt and greateſt temptation ended with his mortal life: his trial was over; he had finiſhed his courſe. On his reſurrection his behaviour was quite different. Fears from men, and prayers to his Father were no more; he was rewarded and crowned with Glory: *for all power was given him in Heaven and in Earth.* And, as his knowing the infirmities of man will make him a merciful Judge and mediator with the Father for repenting ſinners; ſo will his example be a condemnation to the perverſe and obſtinate.

I ſhall end this ſubject, with obſerving, that Jeſus, after his reſurrection, when he was no longer mortal, but going to enjoy the reward promiſed, ſays to Mary, *Go tell my Brethren, that I aſcend to my Father, and their Father, to my God and their God.* Who his brethren were, he had told in his life-time, when he ſtretched out his hands to his Diſciples, ſaying, *Behold my brethren.* And again when he ſays, *My brethren are they who hear the word of God and do it.* And in the ſame ſenſe, the Angel ſpeaks to John in the revelation, when he was going to worſhip him; *See thou do it not, for I am thy fellow-ſervant, and of thy brethren the Prophets, who keep the ſayings of this book; worſhip God.* As all good men are called the ſons of God, ſo are they called brethren to one another: And Mary was ordered to inform his Diſciples, that he was going to aſcend *to his God and their God*; to him who was equally his Father, and the Father of all thoſe who hear his word and do it.

Paul to prove a future reſurrection, gives Chriſt as an example; he ſays, *if there be no reſurrection of the dead, then Chriſt is not riſen: but now Chriſt is riſen, and is the firſt fruit of them who ſlept*; or in other words, you aſk how it is poſſible for a man once dead to become alive again? But Chriſt was dead, and is now alive; therefore it is poſſible for men to become

become alive after death. Here the compariſon (the analogy) lies in Chriſt's being a man as others were; for it would be a falſe inference, if Chriſt was not a man as others were, that his reſurrection ſhould be alledged as a proof to ſhow it poſſible, that all other men might become alive after death likewiſe. Paul ſays, *As many as are led by the ſpirit of God, they are the ſons of God,* and if children, *then heirs of God and joint heirs with Chriſt; for if we ſuffer in like manner as he did, ſo ſhall we be alſo glorified in like manner* (εἴπερ συμπάσχομεν ἵνα καὶ συνδοξασθῶμεν.)

And again, *if the ſpirit of him which raiſed up Jeſus from the dead, dwell in you, he that raiſed Chriſt from the dead, ſhall alſo quicken your mortal bodies, by his ſpirit, that dwelleth in you.* In theſe and many other paſſages in the epiſtles, the parallel is uniformly continued between Jeſus Chriſt and theſe called the Sons of God. The ſame ſpirit which raiſed the one from the dead, will raiſe the others; who, as being the adopted Sons of God, ſhould jointly with him, enjoy that ſtate of happineſs of being with God.

Prayer is an earneſt application to God, that what we deſire may come to paſs. In many inſtances, our Saviour is ſaid to have retired to pray. This circumſtance is irreconcileable with the Nicean Creed. On what account, or for what reaſon can he be ſuppoſed to pray, that any thing ſhould come to paſs? when it is by his own order that all things do come to paſs; but if the concurrence of that Being to whom he prayed, be neceſſary; he muſt then be ſubordinate to that Being; or his prayer or deſire, without the concurrence of the Father, or greater Being to whom he prayed, would be of no effect to produce the thing prayed for; as was the caſe, when he deſired the fatal cup to be removed from him.

This ſeems to me the only interpretation, which either our Saviour's, or St. Paul's words will admit of;

of; and which I cannot reconcile, either to the decree of the council of Nice, or to thoſe Creeds which the Church has impoſed on us, as the Chriſtian faith, under the penalty of eternal damnation for diſbelief. I am therefore convinced, that this Religion inſtituted by the Church, is not the ſame with that, which Jeſus Chriſt ordered his Diſciples to publiſh to the world, in his name. Theſe different councils which are made to direct the Chriſtian faith, ſeem to me exactly ſimilar to the traditions of the elders, which directed the Jewiſh worſhip; of whom our Saviour ſays, " *in vain do ye worſhip God, teaching, for doctrine, the commandments of men, and thro' your traditions make the word of God of none effect.* In countries governed by the Church, the Holy Scriptures are made in reality, what the Prophet Iſaiah repreſents by allegory. * " It is as a book that is " ſealed and delivered to a man to read; who " anſwers, *I cannot read it for it is ſealed*, I dare not " open it." The Prophet adds, " the people's fear " towards me, ſaith the Lord, is taught by the pre- " cepts of men: but woe to them that ſeek deep to " hide their councils from the Lord. Woe unto " them, who call evil good, and good evil; who " put darkneſs for light, and light for darkneſs."

* Iſaiah, chap. 29th.

CHAP-

CHAPTER XIV.

Of External Worship.

EXTERNAL Worſhip is a ceremony performed in token, or evidence of that diſpoſition of mind we ſhould be in, when we addreſs ourſelves to God. Thus kneeling at prayers ſuppoſes humiliation and ſubmiſſion to him whom we ſupplicate, and meeting together at church ſuppoſes unanimity in the manner in which we think God is to be worſhipped; that with St. Paul we may all, with one mind, and with one mouth glorify him. Men readily comprehend what the ſenſes communicate; but when knowledge is to be attained by thought and reflection, weak minds are both unable and unwilling to enquire into, and be convinced of what it is. They are afraid to examine, leſt they ſhould raiſe doubts in their minds, which they are unable to reſolve: ſo theſe external ceremonies become by habit conſidered, not ſimply as tokens of what paſſes in the mind, but as that real homage which God requires: And men are brought to imagine, that humiliation and ſubmiſſion are ſufficiently expreſſed by kneeling, when they ſay their prayers; and to glorify God with one mind and with one mouth, ſufficiently ſhown by meeting together at church. This miſtaken notion has prevailed among the ignorant, from the earlieſt times; and their prieſts have thought it convenient never to undeceive them. Jeſus tells us that the worſhip which God requires, muſt proceed from the mind; *He muſt be worſhipped in ſpirit and in truth*, or by that upright ſincerity which enforces obedience; and not by any external ceremonies, which are often not attended with that ſubmiſſion and purity of mind, of which thoſe are only

only types: He therefore deſires the Jews to learn what the Prophet Hoſea means, when he ſays, *I will have mercy rather than ſacrifice, and the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings*; for if they knew that, they would not have reproved him for doing good on the Sabbath day: for that the meaning of that ſaying is, that it is the intention of the mind, not the actions of the body, which God regards. We have an early inſtance of this, in the ſacrifice of Cain and Abel; they both ſacrificed the firſt fruits of their labour; the one was acceptable, the other not.—for this Cain is angry. To him God ſpeaks, *Why art thou wroth? if you do well, ſhall you not be accepted? but if you do not well, ſin lyeth at thy door.* Here the external ceremony was the ſame in both; but not being attended with the ſame upright diſpoſition of mind in both, Cain's ſacrifice was not accepted.

The firſt piece of external worſhip ordered, is that we ſhould not work on the ſeventh day of the week, for that day was to be kept holy to the Lord. By this commandment, our time is divided into two portions. The firſt ſix days we are to employ in our wordly concerns, but the ſeventh is to be ſet apart entirely to Divine Worſhip: he hath hallowed it, and we are to keep it holy. And that our minds may not be taken off by other concerns, we are forbid to work on that day, or to allow any to be done in our houſes. Holineſs does not conſiſt in being idle, more than in being at work; but as the keeping from work, gives us an opportunity to dedicate that portion of time entirely to the worſhip of God, without being diverted from it by worldly concerns, we are therefore forbid to work on that day. To worſhip God is to obey his commandments, and this portion of our time is ſet apart, for us to ſtudy how we can beſt conform, by our thoughts, words and actions, to the duty he requires of us. But, if on that day, we employ

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our thoughts on objects, which do not concern the worſhip of God, our being idle is ſo far from obſerving the commandment, that it becomes a temptation to our breaking it: This, daily obſervation ſhows; for on what are called holidays, men are more apt to deviſe and perpetrate what is wicked, becauſe they are idle, than, were they at work, they would either have time to think of, or leiſure to execute. I am therefore perſuaded, that the ſimply keeping from work, becauſe it is the Sabbath day, without employing it for that purpoſe for which we are forbid to work, is in the ſight of God, (like Cain's ſacrifice) not obeying the commandment, but a hypocritical ſhow of conformity to the duty required.

Circumciſion is that part of external worſhip, which diſtinguiſhes the deſcendants of Abraham from others. It was inſtituted as a token of the covenant God made with him and his ſeed. A covenant is a mutual agreement between parties, wherein are expreſſed and ſtipulated the conditions each binds himſelf to obſerve; and as there are certain benefits promiſed on obſerving them, ſo are there certain penalties announced on the breach of them; otherwiſe it would be a deed of gift, and not a covenant. And as a proof in future times that this covenant had been entered into, ſome external and laſting token was given, to be evidence againſt the party who ſhould break it; it is a bond to appear in judgment againſt him. The conditions of this covenant were, that Abraham engaged, for himſelf and his poſterity, to walk uprightly before God, and obey his commandments: and God promiſed, that if they did ſo, they ſhould poſſeſs the land of Canaan for ever; and circumciſion was inſtituted as a token, that this covenant had paſſed between God and Abraham, for his deſcendants, *Ye ſhall circumciſe the fleſh of your foreſkin, and it ſhall be the token of a covenant between you and me.*

me. And the conditions of the covenant are again repeated by Moſes, (Lev. 16th.) "That if they "obeyed the commandments of God, in walking up- "rightly, they ſhould be happy above all other na- "tions; but if they broke this covenant, their tranſ- "greſſion ſhould be puniſhed ſeven fold," or that the ſame crimes ſhould be puniſhed in them ſeven times more, than in any other people, with whom this covenant had not been made; *that theſe were the ſtatutes, the judgments and laws, which the Lord made between him and the children of Iſrael on Mount Sinai.* The token of the covenant is the evidence to be brought againſt the party who ſhall break the conditions of it. He thereby makes himſelf ſubject to the penalties ſpecified, and forfeits all claim to the benefits, which the obſervance of it would have entitled him to. The Jews by taking to themſelves the token of the covenant, accepted the conditions; by which, if they did not continue to walk uprightly before God, they were content to loſe poſſeſſion of the land of Canaan, and be puniſhed ſeven fold for their offences. This covenant was ſtrictly obſerved by God; and ſo long as they kept his commandments, their enemies fled before them; they ſubdued the land and poſſeſſed it: But when they broke the conditions, when they ceaſed to walk uprightly, and choſe to themſelves other gods, they became ſubject to the ſtipulated penalties; and circumciſion (the token of their poſſeſſing the land for ever, if they had kept the conditions of it,) became their condemnation. For before their captivity, they had ſo thoroughly broken theſe commandments they had engaged to obſerve, as to become a moſt profligate ſtate. *There was neither truth, juſtice, nor mercy found in the land;* and they who ought to have directed them in their duty, and preſerved them in their obedience to the law of their God, were the moſt abandoned to wickedneſs. *The*

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heads of them judged for reward, their prieſts taught for hire, and their prophets divined for money. The beſt of them was as a briar, and the moſt upright ſharper than a thorn hedge. That as troops of robbers wait for a man, ſo the company of prieſts murdered on the high way by conſent. None called for juſtice, nor did any call for truth; they truſted in vanity and ſpoke lies; they conceived miſchief, and brought forth iniquity. In this ſtate they were, when God ſent them the prophets, meſſengers to warn them of their danger, and to promiſe them forgiveneſs if they would reform. *If ye put away your abominations, ye ſhall not remove.* And again, *Turn every man from his evil way, and the evil of his doings, and dwell in the land which the Lord gave you and your fathers for ever. Go not after other gods to ſerve them, and provoke me not to anger with the work of your hands, and I will do you no hurt. But you have not hearkened to me: therefore thus ſaith the Lord, becauſe you have not heard my words; behold I will ſend and take all the families of the North, and Nebuchadnezzar my ſervant, and bring him againſt this land. And this whole land ſhall be a deſolation, and theſe nations ſhall ſerve the King of Babylon ſeventy years; for as ye have forſaken me and ſerved ſtrange gods in your land, ſo ſhall ye ſerve ſtrangers in a land that is not yours: And it ſhall come to paſs, that after ſeventy years are accompliſhed, I will puniſh the King of Babylon, &c.* Here is an exact relation of their breach of the covenant by idolatry, and an entire corruption of morals; then of their puniſhment as ſtipulated in their covenant on Mount Sinai; and afterwards of the preciſe time this puniſhment was to laſt. The cauſe of God's anger is ſo minutely ſet forth by all the prophets, that one would think, there could be no miſtake in the cauſe of their puniſhment. Yet their own hiſtorian (the author of the Chronicles, after their return from captivity, when it might be ſuppoſed

poſed they were moſt ſenſible of the crimes for which they had been puniſhed, and moſt penitent for having committed them) attributes their captivity, not to a breach of the moral law of God, but of the ceremonial law of Moſes. It ſeems they had ploughed their lands when they ought to have left them fallow. His words are, *They who eſcaped the ſword were carried captive to Babylon, to fulfil the word of the* LORD *by Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths; for ſo long as ſhe lay deſolate, ſhe kept Sabbath.* There are ſuch words ſpoke by Moſes, when he inſtituted the ſabbatical year; but no ſuch paſſage is to be found in Jeremiah, or in any other of the prophets ſent to reform them: the neglect of ceremonies is never laid to their charge by them: On the contrary, the Jews are conſtantly cenſured for putting too much truſt in ceremonies. God ſays, *Who hath required theſe things at your hands? I ſpake not to your fathers, neither commanded them concerning burnt offerings and ſacrifices; but this I commanded, that they obey my voice,* (which is) *to do juſtice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly before me.* The preaching of all the prophets was to this purpoſe. I am perſuaded, if this hiſtorian had peruſed the writings, and examined the meaning of the prophets, he would have aſſigned a juſter reaſon for God's anger and their puniſhment, than a neglect of the ſabbatical year. The Jewiſh worſhip, as directed by Moſes, abounded in ceremonies, which were afterwards greatly multiplied, to commemorate ſeveral occurrences which befel them; and a ſtrict obſervance of theſe, took off their minds from the weightier matters of the law. St. Paul ſays, *Verily circumciſion profiteth, if ye keep the law; but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumciſion becomes uncircumciſion. And ſhall not uncircumciſion, which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who, by the letter and circumciſion, doſt tranſgreſs the law?* It was

a great while before Peter was convinced, that ceremonies were of no merit in the worſhip of God. His maſter had told him, that it was not what went in at the mouth, which defileth a man; yet he would eat nothing common or unclean. This clogging the doctrine of Chriſt with ceremonies, was the occaſion of a very ſharp rebuke from St. Paul to him, *Why compelleſt thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews, knowing that a man is not juſtified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jeſus Chriſt? We have believed in Jeſus Chriſt, that we might be juſtified by the faith of Chriſt, and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law ſhall no fleſh living be juſtified.* The modern Jews follow the practice of their forefathers: they are ſtrict obſervers of the ceremonial part of their religion, but looſe and negligent, in the obſervance of the moral part of it.

The next ceremony I ſhall take notice of, is Baptiſm.—When the affections of the mind are to be typified by the actions of the body, no better emblem can be made uſe of, to ſignify the throwing off all ſinful luſts, than by uſing that expreſſion, which ſignifies cleanſing the body from what has defiled it. Hence, to purify the mind by repentance and amendment of life, is, by the prophets typified, by the figurative expreſſion of waſhing. *Waſh ye, make ye clean, take away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; ceaſe to do evil, learn to do good.* Pilate, to ſhow that he was innocent of putting Jeſus to death, called for water to waſh his hands, to ſignify that it was not with his conſent, that Jeſus was condemned; and the Jews looked on this ceremony as a token of diſſent; they anſwered, "let his blood be on our heads and on "our children's, thou art free." The Baptiſm inſtituted by John, is the token of a new covenant, whereby we engage to reform our lives, and throw off all ſinful luſts, that we may ſhun the wrath that is

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to come: being convinced that the perſevering in our former courſes would bring the wrath of God upon us; but that by repentance and amendment, our paſt ſins would, through the mercy of God, be forgiven. It is a ſolemn oath or appeal to God, that as we have cleanſed our bodies from all filth, by waſhing in water; ſo we engage to purify our minds from all iniquity, by a ſincere repentance and amendment of life: it is therefore called the *Baptiſm of repentance for the remiſſion of ſins.* Thus St. Paul ſays to the Hebrews, *Let us draw near with a true heart, in the fulneſs of faith, having our hearts ſprinkled from an evil conſcience, and our bodies waſhed with pure water.* If this is the nature of Baptiſm, it cannot be adminiſtered to infants, which have neither ſin to accuſe themſelves of, paſſions to tempt them to ſin, nor judgment to diſtinguiſh good from evil; and are therefore incapable of the conditions of Baptiſm. There is no inſtance in the New Teſtament where Baptiſm is ſuppoſed to precede conviction. When the Jews heard John preach in the wilderneſs, and were convinced of the neceſſity of repentance and amendment, they confeſſed their ſins and were baptized. When the Phariſees and Sadducees, whoſe immoral character he knew, came, deſiring to be baptized, he called to them, *O generation of Vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance.* By this it is ſignified, that without a reformation, that external ceremony (Baptiſm) would not confer remiſſion of ſins, ſo as to eſcape the wrath of God for former crimes. The Ethiopian Eunuch, on having the paſſage of Iſaiah explained to him by Philip, and ſhown, that the prophecy there mentioned was fulfilled in Jeſus, aſked why he might not be baptized? Philip anſwered, *If thou believeſt with all thy heart,* (or art convinced of the truth of what I have ſpoken) *then thou*

mayeſt. To whom the Eunuch anſwered, *I believe that* JESUS *was the ſon of* GOD, or the man here propheſied of. On this anſwer, he was baptized by Philip. When Paul and the jailor were, by the miraculous appearances they had ſeen, convinced of the divine miſſion of Jeſus, they were baptized in his name, or took the oath to live agreeable to the doctrine which he had taught. The baptizing of infants, is a very proper inſtitution: it is an oath taken by the ſponſors, whereby they charge themſelves wth the inſtruction of the child, and from time to time, to have the precepts and doctrine of Chriſt explained and inculcated into its mind, as it becomes capable to receive them, until it arrives at that ripeneſs of judgment which is ſufficient to enable it to direct itſelf. By the ſponſors performing the vow they have ſworn, the child becomes habituated to the faith and duty required in a chriſtian; which is the greateſt ſecurity that can be thought of, for the child to become a good one. But ſtill this is not the Baptiſm of John, nor of Chriſt, nor of the Apoſtles. By them Baptiſm was only adminiſtered to converts; *repent and be baptized*, was their precept. It ſeems that a miſtake in theſe rites took early poſſeſſion of mens minds, and that the Corinthians were not rightly informed, either of the doctrine of Chriſt or the nature of Baptiſm. When he wrote, there were diviſions among them, Paul ſays, "I thank God, I baptized none of you, but Criſpus "and Gaius and the houſhold of Stephanus." It ſeems theſe were the only perſons whoſe inſtruction before Baptiſm, he could anſwer for. Were a Jew, a Turk, or a Pagan to become chriſtian, it would be proper to ſhow his converſion, by being baptized in the name of Chriſt, who ſays, *that him who acknowledges me before men, will I alſo acknowledge before my heavenly* FATHER. But this muſt be the voluntary act of the perſon converted. The buſineſs of an in-

inſtructor is to ſhow a man his danger, and how he may avoid it: Wherefore Paul tells them, *That Chriſt ſent me, not to baptize, but to preach the Goſpel.* Infant baptiſm, like the Jewiſh circumciſion, confers no merit of itſelf; they are both involuntary ſufferings of the child: And what the Apoſtle ſays of the one, may be with equal juſtice, ſaid of the other, viz. *Circumciſion is nothing, and uncircumciſion is nothing;* the whole duty required, is comprehended in this, *Keep the commandments of God;* and whether we are circumciſed or not, or whether we are baptized or not, will neither add to, nor take from our merit; or be alledged in judgment, either for or againſt us, when God will aſſign to every man his portion. But for one, who has, from his birth, been brought up in the chriſtian doctrine, and has always profeſſed being convinced of the truth of it, no ſuch publick teſtimony is requiſite. For ſuch Chriſt hath inſtituted another ſacrament.

The Euchariſt is a ceremony, whereby men repreſent, or put themſelves in the place of thoſe, to whom this ſacrament was at firſt adminiſtered. They are ſuppoſed to have the ſame faith, the ſame upright diſpoſition, and reſignation to the will of God, which the Apoſtles had, when our Saviour gave them his laſt charge. He was then going to ſuffer death, for doing the will of his father, and publiſhing to the world what God required of men, that they might obtain mercy for their ſins; and that his ſufferings ſhould be to them an example, that no perſecution ſhould excuſe or induce them to depart from their faith and duty: and in order to preſerve this in their minds, he directed, that after his death, they ſhould meet, to eat and drink together in remembrance of him, and thereby imprint in their minds the inſtructions he left them. Thus Paul tells the Corinthians, that as often as they eat this bread and drink

of this cup, they would ſhow forth the Lord's death till he came; wherefore, whoever would do this unworthily, ſhould be guilty of the body and blood of Chriſt; but that a man ſhould firſt examine himſelf, before he eat or drank in remembrance of him.

The remiſſion of ſins was inſured to man, in conſequence of a new covenant, which God had made with man, and the Euchariſt (or laſt ſupper) was appointed in commemoration of him, through whom this new covenant was announced to the world. The cutting off of the foreſkin, the waſhing with water, or the eating and drinking together, are things which, in themſelves, ſignify nothing; but if they are done in token of an oath, which we voluntarily take, and engage, in the preſence of God, to perform; if we afterwards break that oath, then theſe ceremonies become evidences to condemn us. Wherefore St. Paul ſays, *Let a man firſt examine himſelf*, leſt he do it raſhly; let him conſider ſeriouſly what is the ſtrength of his reſolution, his faith; whether his repentance is ſo ſincere, and reſolution ſo ſtrong, that he can rely on his future behaviour; and if he thinks he can, then let him eat of the bread, and drink of the cup; but if he does it, without conſidering the importance of the oath he takes, and returns to his evil ways, he will heap ſin on his own head. This ſecond covenant announced by our Saviour, differs eſſentially from the firſt made with Abraham, and repeated by Moſes. The rewards and puniſhments of the Jewiſh covenant concerned only this life, and had ſo little relation to a future ſtate, that it continued a diſpute among the Jews (from any information which Moſes had given them) whether there was to be a future ſtate or not; for the precepts of Moſes had not aſcertained this point: it was by the light of nature only, the Phariſees believed in a reſurrection.

" If

" If ye walk in my ſtatutes, and keep my com-
" mandments, ſaith the Lord, I will give you rain
" in due ſeaſon: ye ſhall eat your bread to the full,
" and dwell in the land ſafely. I will rid evil beaſts
" out of your land; your enemies ſhall fly before
" you, five of you ſhall chaſe an hundred, and an
" hundred of you ſhall put ten thouſand to flight.
" But if ye do not obey my commandments I will
" appoint over you, terror and the burning ague.
" Ye ſhall ſow your ſeed in vain, for your enemies
" ſhall eat the fruit of it; ye ſhall be ſlain before
" your enemies, and they who hate you, ſhall reign
" over you. I will ſend wild beaſts among you,
" which ſhall rob you of your children, and deſtroy
" your cattle. I will bring a ſword among you, and
" avenge the quarrel of my covenant. And if ye
" ſtill walk contrary to me, I will alſo walk contrary
" to you, and chaſtiſe you ſevenfold for your ſins.
And theſe threatnings have been remarkably fulfilled, by the preſent abject ſtate the Jews are reduced to. But the ſecond covenant, announced by Jeſus Chriſt, hath quite different rewards and puniſhments annexed to it: and the obſervance of it, is ſo far from promiſing temporary bleſſings, that they, who embrace it, become thereby, the more expoſed to perſecution and oppreſſion in this life, than other men; but that thoſe ſufferings, (on account of their adhering to the truth) inſtead of being conſidered as marks of the divine wrath, will be conſidered as merit in the eye of God. Jeſus ſaith, *Bleſſed are ye when men ſhall revile you and perſecute you, and ſhall ſay all manner of evil againſt you falſely, for my ſake; rejoice and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in Heaven.* Paul tells the Corinthians, *We are naked and buffeted, and have no certain dwellings. When we are reviled, we bleſs; being perſecuted we ſuffer it; being defamed, we entreat. We are as the filth*

of the world, and the offscourings of all things unto this day. They, who truſt to the ſecond covenant, muſt lay aſide all thoughts of rewards on earth; they muſt have ſuch faith in Chriſt, as to believe, that after this life, there will be a general judgment; when all men ſhall be examined on their behaviour while on earth, when they will be rewarded or puniſhed, according to what they have done on earth. Jeſus therefore directs his Diſciples, to turn their thoughts altogether to ſuch objects, as will make them accepted of by God, when they come to be judged. *Lay up treaſures in Heaven, and fear not them who kill the body, but are not able to kill the ſoul, but fear him who can kill both ſoul and body in Hell.* Paul acknowledges, *That if in this life only we have hope thro' Chriſt, we are of all men the moſt miſerable.*

This is not applicable to the heads of the church for theſe fourteen hundred years paſt, who have, of all men, been the moſt happy in affairs of this life, if riches, grandeur, and abſolute dominion can make them ſo.

CHAP.

CHAPTER XV.

Of the MANNER *whereby the* CHURCH *acquired its* POWER.

TO know how this great dominion hath been acquired, requires ſome recollection of the hiſtory of Chriſtianity.—When Jeſus Chriſt delivered his doctrine to the Apoſtles and Diſciples, whatever they did not rightly comprehend, he explained to them: he told them, that his kingdom (or that ſtate of happineſs prepared for the righteous,) was not of this world; but *one* to commence, when all men ſhall be brought to judgment: when their earthly bodies ſhould be changed into ſpiritual ones, when the righteous ſhould be rewarded, and the wicked ſhould be puniſhed, each according to his works in this life. That in this life the righteous are perſecuted by the wicked; but that perſecution here is only a trial of their obedience, and not a puniſhment inflicted by God for offences; that they were not to be afraid of men, who can only kill the body, and then can do no more; but to fear him, who can kill both body and ſoul in hell. After his reſurrection, he ordered them to go and teach all nations theſe things they had heard from him. In obedience to this, they diſperſed themſelves; and preached his doctrine in all countries where their zeal led them to. If any doubts aroſe among the new Converts, they applied to the Apoſtles to reſolve theſe doubts; as was the caſe at Antioch, where ſome imagining, that all Chriſtians ought to be circumciſed, they ſent to the Apoſtles and Church of Jeruſalem, to know if this was neceſſary; who, on that account, met together in council, and reſolved their doubts. There was no written law,

for

for Chriſtians at that time to appeal to; men were converted, merely, from what they heard and ſaw. I am alſo perſuaded that many converts were made, not ſo much from the propriety of the Chriſtian Doctrine being laid open to them, as from the folly and abſurdity of the Heathen worſhip being expoſed. After the death of the Apoſtles, men had no longer an opportunity to apply to thoſe, who had been converſant with Chriſt; and it was a long time after their death, that the Goſpels and Epiſtles, which compoſe the New Teſtament, were collected into one book; and even when they were, very few had copies of it. Therefore when any conſiderable number of Converts were made in one town or place, they uſed to meet together, and converſe on their faith, or on theſe duties, which their new religion laid them under. And theſe collected bodies, or meetings of Chriſtians, were called the Churches of theſe towns or places; and whoever was eſteemed the wiſeſt, the beſt informed, and moſt zealous in the faith, became Biſhops, or overſeers of theſe Churches: hence the dignity and importance of the Biſhop, was in proportion to the Church he preſided over; and when any doubts or diſputes happened in the ſmaller Churches, the only method they had to decide thoſe diſputes was, by a reference to a neighbouring Church, where a greater number, and of conſequence, a ſuppoſed more knowing body of Chriſtians compoſed it. In all doubts and diſputes, the reference was from the ſmaller to the greater Church: the villages appealed to the towns, the towns to the cities, and the cities to the metropolis: and according to the greatneſs of theſe Churches in different places, they who preſided over them, were called Paſtors, Biſhops, Arch-biſhops and Patriarchs. From the metropolis there could be no appeal; for none could ly from a larger to a ſmaller body. When Paul was carried to Rome,

chriſtianity

chriſtianity had been heard of, but not known there. He ſtaid there two years, and had full liberty to preach the Goſpel: the field was large before him, and he wanted neither time, opportunity nor inclination to improve it; inſomuch that ſome of the Emperor's houſhold became Chriſtians. Rome was then the metropolis of the world; there, the men of the moſt learning were; and the Church of Rome, as it was the moſt numerous, ſo was it the moſt knowing. And of courſe after the death of the Apoſtles, all doubts and diſputes in the ſmaller churches, were finally determined by it; the ultimate appeal was to Rome; ſo that the Chriſtian faith became in a manner lodged in it; and the Biſhop, or he who preſided among the Chriſtians of Rome, became the firſt man of the whole Chriſtian Church. And all other churches were obliged to acquieſce with the opinion of the church convened at Rome.

The confuſion and anarchy occaſioned by the civil wars in the empire, during the ſecond and third century, obliged the different uſurpers to endeavour to gain the affections of the people, they purpoſed to govern; and notwithſtanding the conſtraint put on chriſtianity, by the former Emperors, Conſtantine found their numbers ſo encreaſed, that it was neceſſary for him to gain them; and for this purpoſe he declared himſelf a Chriſtian, (for the other account, given of a miraculous converſion by a dream, ſeems a ridiculous forgery) Policy obliged him to take this ſtep. The good and quiet of the ſtate required, that there ſhould be but one religion eſtabliſhed in the empire. His predeceſſors had endeavoured to bring this about, by extirpating chriſtianity, but could not effect it: he therefore tried the contrary method, which was to make chriſtianity the eſtabliſhed religion of the empire. But, on enquiry into what that religion was, he found the Chriſtians ſo diſtracted, ſo divided in

their

their opinions relating to ſome of the principal articles of chriſtianity, that he could not aſcertain, wherein conſiſted that religion, which he was to embrace and authoriſe: he therefore called a council to determine, *what was the Chriſtian faith.* This council met at *Nice* from whom that remarkable decree proceeded. Before chriſtianity was authoriſed by the Emperors, no man would take on himſelf to be the Biſhop of a Church, but ſuch whom a thorough conviction of the truth, and a ſtrong zeal excited to take that office upon him: it was an office expoſed, in a particular manner, to perſecution. But when chriſtianity became the eſtabliſhed religion, and all danger from perſecution was thereby removed, the Biſhops, or directors of the different churches became men of importance. The influence they had over the people, made it neceſſary for the Emperors to gain their favour and approbation; and the chief Biſhops became the chief favourites. In this fluctuating ſtate of government, then prevailing in the empire, the Biſhops kept the people in obedience; they directed their wills; for as the people placed a confidence in their paſtors, ſo they paid a blind obedience to them. The church of Rome, long habituated to give advice when applied to, now took on itſelf a power to direct, when not applied to. From this time we may date the corruptions of chriſtianity. Before Conſtantine's time, no motives beſides conviction, could induce a man, from a Heathen to become a Chriſtian: Temptation lay altogether on the other ſide. But when power and riches attended the office of a Biſhop; then bad men, men of cunning and ambition, uſed their utmoſt endeavours, by art and hypocriſy, to obtain that office. And Jerom tells us, *that the church, by that revolution, loſt as much of its virtue, as it gained of power and wealth.* Inſtead of that ſimplicity of manners recommended by Jeſus Chriſt, and preached

by

by the primitive chriſtians, that univerſal benevolence, that liberty of judgment (that every man ſhould be convinced in his own mind) that expreſs prohibition for one man to judge of anothers merit, when he ſays, *Judge not, leaſt ye be judged; condemn not, and ye ſhall not be condemned; forgive, and ye ſhall be forgiven. Shall the blind lead the blind? ſhall they not both fall into the ditch?* or ſhall fallible men preſume to determine for God; all this was laid aſide, and the clergy, in their councils afterwards, quite altered the very fundamental principles of chriſtianity: they made the kingdom of Chriſt altogether a kingdom of this world. And inſtead of its being next to an impoſſibility, for the rich to enter into the kingdom of heaven, they decreed it next to an impoſſibility for any other but the rich to enter. Indulgences and forgiveneſs of ſins were to be purchaſed by money, or by gifts to the church. They deprived men of the liberty, wherewith Chriſt had made them free, and put them again under the yoke of bondage. And to ſecure their conqueſt over human underſtanding, they deprived men of the liberty of examining into their aſſumed power; they made it penal to read the ſcriptures. They became as the Jewiſh lawyers were, to whom Chriſt ſays, *Wo unto you lawyers, for ye have taken away the key of knowledge; ye enter not in yourſelves, and theſe that were entering in, ye hindered.* The means uſed by the clergy, to bring mankind under this ſlaviſh ſubjection, were always conformable to the circumſtances of the times. The diſtractions and confuſion, which raged thro' the Empire on its decline, brought on ſuch an univerſal neglect of learning, and inability of reflection, as made it eaſy for artful and deſigning men, to impoſe on the underſtandings, and delude the minds of the ignorant. The Biſhop of Rome aſſumed a ſuperior power to others by preſcription; as all doubts and diſputes

diſputes between the different ſocieties of chriſtians, ever ſince the Apoſtles time, had been ultimately determined by the church of Rome. It was the imperial city, which had long governed the world in civil affairs, by its right of conqueſt: and it was therefore proper, for the dignity of the ſtate, that the church of Rome ſhould likewiſe have the ſupremacy, and direct all other churches in religious matters. But when the biſhop of Conſtantinople, on this account, took on himſelf, the title of univerſal biſhop, Gregory of Rome exclaimed againſt it, "as antichriſtian, blaſphemous, infernal, and diabolical for any man to "aſſume the title of univerſal or oecumenical biſhop; for that it was imitating Lucifer, who being "ſwelled with pride, had exalted himſelf above his "equals." But theſe reaſons did not prevail with the biſhop of Conſtantinople to give up a title, which both he and the emperor Mauritius, thought belonged to the imperial ſeat. Yet when Mauritius was dethroned, and he and all his family murdered by Phocas, who uſurped the empire; then, becauſe Cyriacus (then biſhop of Conſtantinople) endeavoured to ſave the lives of the empreſs and her daughters, Phocas, in revenge, took the title of univerſal Biſhop from Cyriacus, and conferred it on his antogoniſt Boniface Biſhop of Rome; which, notwithſtanding all the ſtrong and pious reaſons, urged againſt ſuch arrogance in any particular biſhop by Gregory, was nevertheleſs accepted of by his ſucceſſor. And that which appeared ſo wicked, ſo blaſphemous and diabolical, in the eyes of Gregory, appeared in a quite different light to Boniface, when the ſame temptation was thrown in his way. And this title, thus conferred by an uſurper (the moſt wicked man in his time) on the See of Rome, hath been ever ſince kept, and exerciſed by the biſhop of Rome at the expence of an infinite number of lives.

Men,

Men, whoſe power is built on the deluded imagination of thoſe whom they govern, have but a precarious title: they will therefore fortify it, by all the means and by every method they can think of. The world was ignorant; men received their inſtructions from the clergy; very few took it from the New Teſtament, or had an opportunity to examine it: and on this ignorance, the church of Rome hath built its power. For they did not allow that it was, ſolely, the gift of Phocas, which gave it a ſuperiority over all others; they inſiſted that they poſſeſſed it by Divine right; that as Jeſus, after his reſurrection, had told the eleven Apoſtles, that all power was given him in heaven and in earth, and ſaid to them, *As the Father hath ſent me, ſo ſend I you*; they inſiſt that they as the ſucceſſors of the Apoſtles have the ſame power as the Apoſtles had; that Peter was the prince of the Apoſtles (as to him, had been given, in a particular manner, the keys of heaven and hell) therefore the biſhop of Rome by being ſucceſſor of Peter, muſt alſo have this power inherent in him above his brethren. It would be difficult to ſhow that Peter ever aſſumed any power, ſuperior to his brethren; or ever thought himſelf infallible. It is very evident that Paul did not think him ſo, for, at Antioch, he withſtood him to the teeth, becauſe he was to blame, and that not from his miſtaking, but from his perverting the orders of his maſter. And by the teſtimony of Paul alſo, this claim of their being ſucceſſors to Peter, in the Biſhoprick of Rome, appears equally badly founded. By him it would ſeem, that Peter neither was, nor ever could be biſhop of Rome. His words to the Galatians are, "When they (the Apoſtles) ſaw that the goſpel of the "uncircumciſion was committed to me, as the goſ-"pel of the circumciſion was to Peter, (for he that "wrought effectually in Peter, to the apoſtleſhip of

"the

"the circumcision, the same was mighty in me to-
"wards the Gentiles.) And when James and Ce-
"phas and John, (who seemed to be pillars,) per-
"ceived the grace that was given unto me, they
"gave unto me and Barnabas the right hand of
"fellowship, that we should go to the Heathen, and
"they to those of the circumcision." Here, by agree-
ment, is allotted the province each should take. All
then that is wanting to determine whether Peter was
ever Bishop of Rome or not, is to know, whether the
Romans were Heathens or Jews, when their con-
version was undertaken: a question which may be
easily resolved in the negative; and thence all claim
of power, derived from Peter, to the bishop of Rome,
must fall to the ground. If it should be asked, why
the bishops of Rome did not take Paul for their pre-
decessor, (who certainly was their first bishop) rather
than Peter, who could not be so? the whole deport-
ment of the Popes hath shown the motives for acting as
they have. It was power, and not truth which they
aimed at; it was subjection and not instruction they
required of the people; and the only seeming pre-
eminence, given by Christ to one Apostle above
another, was to Peter: the keys of heaven and hell
were not given to Paul: and as they claimed a power
superior to their fellows, this claim must be derived
from some one, on whom it had been conferred: it
was therefore necessary, (in support of their claim)
to make themselves the successors of Peter, whatever
Paul or any one else should, or could say to the con-
trary.

As the church at first acquired its power, from the
ignorance which overspread the world, and had im-
proved the delusion, during so many centuries, by
depriving men of the means of better information,
there is little of prophecy required in saying, that
when mankind shall have thrown off that bondage,

which

which the church hath so long subjected them to, and shall have reassumed that liberty, wherewith Christ hath made them free, by taking to themselves the privilege to judge of that faith and duty, which the religion of Christ allows and recommends, that then this deception, this imagined power of the clergy, will be at an end. Truth requires no support but from knowledge and reason. *Search the scriptures, for these are they which testify of me*, are the words of Christ. It is an inward conviction only, which makes a man a christian. Wherefore the sword, with which the Messiah conquered the enemies of God; is always put (not in his hand, but) as proceeding from his mouth. On the other hand, as falshood is built on ignorance, it must be supported by violence.

To punish a man for worshiping God according to his conscience, or because he differs from others in opinion, about the manner he is to be worshiped, is persecution. It is punishing the body for a disagreement of the mind. The design of religion is to convert men from their errors, by convincing their understanding, and it is reason only that can convince the understanding, or change their conceptions. It is a free-will offering, which God requires. We must serve him from a sense, and love of our duty; for he is to be worshiped in spirit and in truth; wherefore St. Paul tells us, *that every one should be convinced in his own mind.*

Persecution, or punishing the body for a disagreement in the mind, may be very proper means in the hands of an usurping power, to compel men to be subjects, but such arguments will never make them converts. Where the understanding is to be informed in order to rectify the judgment, the arguments to be used, must be applied to the mind. The religion of Christ is therefore called a religion of liberty, it refers men

to their reaſon and conſcience. Perſecution is never applied, but when arguments from truth and reaſon are deficient; it is only falſehood that requires perſecution to ſupport it: and he who will not give his aſſent willingly, muſt be forced, or put to death; leſt his opinion ſhould infect the minds of others, *Delenda eſt Carthago.* Thus Pope Paul the fourth, gave this poſitive advice on his death bed, *that the inquiſition only, could preſerve the church.* Were perſecution allowable, the Jews committed no ſin in putting our Saviour to death: but if the putting him to death, becauſe he differed from the high prieſts, or Jewiſh church, was a crime, then perſecution cannot be allowable, but muſt be a ſin, in any church. There is not an inſtance, or precept in all the New Teſtament, which even countenances, much leſs authorizes perſecution, for men's differing in opinion from Chriſt. When our ſaviour, in his journey from Samaria to Jeruſalem, came to a village, the inhabitants of which would not receive him, the zeal of James and John was ſo inflamed, that they aſked their maſter, *Lord wilt thou, that we command fire to come down from heaven, to conſume them, as Elias did?* but he turned and rebuked them, and ſaid, *Ye know not what manner of ſpirit ye are of; for the Son of Man is not come to deſtroy men's lives, but to ſave them.* And the only reſentment he ſhewed, was to leave the inhabitants of that village to themſelves, and go to another. By the religion of Chriſt, it is highly criminal to endeavour even to impoſe on the underſtanding. St. Paul ſays, *Prove all things, and hold faſt that which is good; that we ſhould renounce the hidden works of darkneſs, not walking in craftineſs, nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by a manifeſtation of the truth, to commend ourſelves to every man's conſcience in the ſight of God.*

But how can we obey this precept. *Prove all things*

and hold faſt that which is good? When the church hath deprived us of the liberty of proving any thing by our own judgment; and hath decreed, that whoever ſhall preſume to put this advice of St. Paul, in competition with their orders, ſhall be puniſhed in like manner as St. Paul was; who, for teaching a doctrine different from the then eſtabliſhed church, was put to death: Nay they do not ſtop here; they will proſecute their revenge after death; they will order God to ſend their ſouls to hell after they have burned their bodies. If our Saviour is to be believed, the greateſt duty incumbent on men to obſerve, next to the love of God, is to love our neighbours. But there never hath appeared in the world any religious ſect, ſo devoid of brotherly love and charity, as that which calls itſelf the infallible church of Chriſt. Paul ſays, *Tho' I ſpeak with the tongues of men and Angels; tho' I have the gift of prophecy, and underſtand all myſteries and all knowledge; tho' I have faith ſo as to remove mountains; tho' I beſtow all my goods to feed the poor; and tho' I give my body to be burned, yet if I want charity, all theſe virtues will profit me nothing.* God hath declared (Deut. Chap. 32.) *That to him belongeth vengeance and recompenſe, for that he will judge his people. Vengeance is mine, ſaith the Lord and I will repay.* To Job he ſaith, *who is this, that darkeneth counſel without knowledge? knoweſt thou the ordinances of Heaven? Canſt thou ſet the dominion thereof on the earth? Shall he who contendeth with the Almighty, inſtruct him? He that reproveth God, let him anſwer it.* How then can men, who profeſs to believe theſe expreſſions to be the word of God, preſume to take that power on them, which God hath ſo expreſsly reſerved to himſelf? The religion of Chriſt requires that every one ſhould examine, and be convinced in his own mind; and eſtabliſh his belief on the beſt of his judgment, according to the powers,

with which God has endowed him. For this cauſe the Bereans are commended; they are praiſed by Paul, as being more noble-minded than thoſe of Theſſalonica, in that they did not receive the Goſpel, merely on his report, but they ſearched the Scriptures to know, if what he reported was true. Our Saviour tells us, *the kingdom of God is within us*, and aſks, *why, even of ourſelves, do we not judge of what is right?* But the church hath condemned all this. It ſays, The kingdom of God is not within us, neither ſhall we of ourſelves judge of what is right, nor be directed by our conſcience in the ſight of God, but we are to receive the kingdom of God from them; who, from their office have an inherent right, to give it to thoſe only, whom they ſhall judge proper: and he who reproveth the church, let him anſwer it. Here is a plain defiance paſſed, between Chriſt and the church, *and let the party who is wrong anſwer it.* In my imagination, it is not only the height of impiety, but the height of folly in men, to take on themſelves to judge for God. *Know they the ordinances of Heaven? Can they ſet the dominion thereof on the earth?* Our Saviour often repeats this injunction, *judge not.* To imagine, on the great day of univerſal judgment, that the uprightneſs of another man's faith will be determined by my judgment, or that the ſincerity of my belief is to be determined by the conceptions of another man, is to take to ourſelves to give laws to God, and to exalt ourſelves above our judge. The moral law hath ſufficiently informed us, what crimes are cognizable, and puniſhable by men, as when God ſays, *whoſo ſheddeth man's blood, by man ſhall his blood be ſhed.* The very conſtitution of ſociety will oblige every member of it to conform to the moral law, as no ſociety can ſubſiſt, without every one ſubmitting to that obligation: But ſpeculative opinions, about the moſt proper manner to worſhip God, or pay him our adoration,

adoration, and which neither treſpaſs on the moral law, nor diſturb the peace of ſociety, are to be left to the particular judgment and conviction of every individual; as men will then be judged, not in a collective body, as being of ſuch a ſect, but where every individual will be obliged to anſwer for himſelf. This is the doctrine taught by Jeſus Chriſt and his apoſtles. And Paul tells us, *That if he, or even an angel from heaven ſhould come and preach any other doctrine, let him be accurſed.* Now whoſoever takes on himſelf to ſupercede or controul the orders of another, doth thereby exalt himſelf above that other. If the church takes on itſelf a power to diſpenſe with theſe things, which God hath declared ſinful, it thereby ſupercedes the decrees of God, and exalts itſelf above God: But the church, by its indulgences, its diſpenſations, abſolutions, faculties, exemptions, penance and commutations, hath aſſumed this power; it therefore hath exalted itſelf above God. Yea it hath aſſumed a more extraordinary one; it hath declared that God ſhall not pardon ſins without their permiſſion, and hath ſubjected him, not only to the orders of the church, but alſo to the intention of him, whom they ſhall impower to execute their orders. The council of Trent hath decreed in their 13th article, that no ſacrament ſhould be of any force, except it be accompanied with the intention of the prieſt who adminiſters it; ſo that conviction, repentance and amendment of life, with ſubſequent baptiſm, cannot make a man a chriſtian, except the prieſt who baptiſes him, intends at the ſame time, that he ſhould be one. Neither ſhall the mercy of God extend to the forgiving the ſins of a ſincere penitent, except the prieſt, who pronounces the abſolution, intends at the ſame time, that God ſhould pardon him; for it is not the words pronounced, but the intention of the prieſt who pronounces them, that

that is to make the ſacrament effectual. Thus, the will, and power of God to pardon ſinners, may be controuled, and made ſubſervient to the mental reſervation of a malicious lying hypocrite. In this Council, Catarinus biſhop of Minori, was ſo fooliſhly hardy, as to take up the argument, in ſupport of God Almighty's power, againſt the mental reſervation of a wicked hypocrite, but he was not in the ſecret, his opinion was over-ruled, and the Council determined and decreed, that let the Prieſt be a hypocrite or not, his intention was, and ſhould be neceſſary, in order to make the ſacrament effectual to the purpoſe, for which it is adminiſtered. After this view of the power aſſumed by the church, let us compare it to that ſtate of deluſion propheſied of by St. Paul, where there ſeems to me ſuch an exact reſemblance between them, that were there no other arguments to convince me of the truth of chriſtianity, than this deſcription; the completion of this prophecy, would convince me of the truth of that religion, which could predict what hath ſo exactly come to paſs. Paul writing to the Theſſalonians concerning the Day of Judgment, or the ſecond coming of Chriſt, ſaith, *That day ſhall not come except there be a falling away firſt; and that man of ſin be revealed, the ſon of perdition, who ſhall oppoſe, and exalt himſelf above all that is called God, or that is worſhipped; ſo that he, as God, ſitteth in the temple of God, ſhewing himſelf that he is God; even him, whoſe coming is after the working of Satan, with all power and ſigns and lying wonders; and with all deceivableneſs of unrighteouſneſs to them that periſh; becauſe they received not the love of truth, that they might be ſaved. And for this cauſe, God will ſend them a ſtrong deluſion, that they might believe a lie.* And to Timothy he ſays, *Now the ſpirit ſpeaketh expreſsly, that in the latter times, ſome ſhall depart from the faith, giving heed to ſeducing ſpirits, and the doctrines of devils;*

Devils; ſpeaking lies in hypocriſy; having their conſciences ſeared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abſtain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thankſgiving.

Our Saviour tells us, that every tree is known by its fruit, *for men do not gather grapes of thorns, nor figs of thiſtles: a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit, but by their fruits ye ſhall know them.* And St. Paul deſires us, *to ſtand faſt in the liberty, wherewith Chriſt hath made us free.* But perſecution is the very reverſe of liberty, and therefore the very reverſe of the religion of Chriſt; the principles of his religion are brotherly love and charity to all men; but perſecution is the production of malice, tyranny and ambition, working on the minds of a credulous ignorant multitude. Thus the Jewiſh prieſts and ſcribes perſecuted Chriſt and his Diſciples; thus the heathen powers perſecuted the primitive Chriſtians; and thus the Romiſh church perſecute all thoſe, who will not receive its doctrine; while the heads of it, ſecure and happy in the ignorance of the deluded multitude, divert themſelves with the thought

Quantum nobis profuit hæc fabula Chriſti!

FINIS.

3 NO 65

ERRATA.

PAGE.	LINE.	
26.	8.	For wordly, read worldly.
52.	29.	For wouuld, read would.
60.	3.	For oxtention, read extenſion.
61.	21.	For ſenſible, read ſenſitive.
63.	20.	For extroardinary, extraordinary.
83.	18.	For this, read his.
125.	30.	For has, read haſt.
170.	00.	For could ly, read could lie.
181.	15.	For ſupercedes, read ſuperſedes.

ERRATA.

PAGE.	LINE.	
56.	6.	For wordly, read worldly.
57.	20.	For would, read would.
60.	3.	For extention, read extention.
61.	21.	For fruitful, read fruitive.
63.	20.	For extreordinary, extraordinary.
83.	18.	For this, read his.
103.	20.	For has, read had.
110.	20.	For could, read could lie.
181.	15.	For fupercede, read fuperfede.

B N0 65

SUPPLEMENT.

A Clamour being raiſed againſt the Author of the foregoing Sheets, as having advanced tenets repugnant to the doctrines of Chriſtianity, hath obliged him to reviſe what he hath wrote; but, after conſidering the paſſages objected to, and comparing them with thoſe of the New Teſtament, which are alledged to diſprove them; he is ſo far from thinking that what he hath advanced, is contrary to the doctrine of Chriſt, that he cannot conceive how that doctrine can be underſtood, or explained, in a manner different from what he hath done. The author hath delivered his opinion openly and candidly, with his reaſons for entertaining them; he neither expects nor requires others to concur with him; he leaves every man to judge for himſelf. All that he inſiſts on, or contends for, is the Right of Private Judgment; a right which is not only allowed, but commanded by our Saviour, for every man to exerciſe. The precepts of Chriſt, delivered to us in the New Teſtament, are the only rule to direct us in our belief, and if, in the explanation of them, things appear in a different light to him than they do to others; or that he hath drawn wrong inferences from the Scriptures; or is miſtaken in the meaning of what Chriſt hath directed; it is his deſire to be put right by better information than his own judgment affords him: but this he alſo expects, that ſuch information ſhould be given with that Chriſtian Spirit of meekneſs, which hath nothing in view but truth: But what hath hitherto appeared in anſwer to him, hath proceeded more from a rail-

ing diſpoſition, to declaim againſt him as a man, than, from reaſon or argument, to confute him as an author, or broacher of erroneous doctrines.

He hath ſaid, "that the religion of Jeſus Chriſt doth not authorize the belief of a ſoul different or diſtinct from the body: or, that it muſt neceſſarily be ſuppoſed "that there is an intermediate ſtate between death and the general reſurrection, enjoyed by the Soul, when thus ſuppoſed to be ſeparated from the body by death." As this aſſertion is contrary to the belief and received opinion generally entertained; and as the whole power and policy of the Roman church is built on this ſuppoſition of an intermediate ſtate, he thinks it neceſſary to conſider that queſtion more particularly, as an article of chriſtian faith.

The ſuppoſition of a future exiſtence, with a trial and judgment after death, hath been entertained by mankind from the earlieſt ages; and why it ſhould be ſo, may be eaſily accounted for. There is in the human mind a certain natural diſpoſition, or inſtinct, which compells men to believe in a firſt cauſe, in a ſupreme power, which preſides over and directs the univerſe, a being who ſees and obſerves all the actions of men, knows their moſt ſecret thoughts and can clearly diſtinguiſh the different motives our deſires proceed from. The knowledge of what is good and evil, or the difference between what is right and wrong is, by nature, ſtrongly impreſſed on the human mind; and that the firſt is to be obſerved and followed, while the other is to be avoided and withſtood. This is conſcience, or that law within us, which diſtinguiſhes virtue from vice, which controuls the will, and keeps the paſſions in ſubjection. Obſervation ſhewed men, that, in this life, virtue was not always ſuitably rewarded, nor vice puniſhed.

ed. They were thence induced to believe, that there muſt be ſome future ſtate, ſome examination and trial after death, when the merits of men while on earth would be judged of; and rewards or puniſhments aſſigned, conformable to their actions. There is no nation ſo barbarous, ſo void of reflection, as not to believe in, or to imagine ſome future exiſtence or repreſentation, wherein they were to enjoy either a ſtate of happineſs or miſery, agreeable to their moral behaviour on earth: but men, uninformed, uninſtructed by divine revelation, having nothing but the light of reaſon to direct them, can form no idea, nor frame any judgment of things to come, beyond what obſervation of things paſt, and ſimilitude preſent to the mind. Therefore in things obſcure and uncertain, they ſuppoſe, and conclude that to be truth, which comes neareſt to probability. Obſervation ſhewed men, that after death the body corrupted; that it often was made food for other animals, or manure for vegetables, and of conſequence converted into their ſubſtance; and that what was not ſo, mouldered thro' time into duſt: they thence concluded that this corruptible, changeable and periſhable ſubſtance could not be the proper object of future judgment; but that ſomething elſe muſt be joined to it, which on death was not periſhable, in order to become this proper object. There is nothing in man to which they could aſſign this property, beſides the mind or thinking faculty; and therefore concluded, that altho' the body periſhed on death, yet the mind or thinking faculty muſt not, but was an immortal ſpirit. This gave riſe to the ſuppoſition of man's being compoſed of two principles, a mortal and an immortal part, a body and a ſoul; and that life conſiſted in a junction of theſe two,

and death in a ſeparation of them; that as during this junction, the body was altogether under the influence and direction of the ſoul; ſo on a ſeparation of them, the ſoul became anſwerable for what the body had committed, was immediately brought to judgment, and was either rewarded or puniſhed, agreeable to what it had induced the body to commit, while under its influence. This is a very plain and ſimple way of accounting for the exiſtence of the human ſoul: but there is one objection that naturally occurs, viz. If the life of man depended on a junction of an immortal ſpirit with a mortal body, what did the life of brutes depend on? who, according to their different claſſes, were alſo endowed with thought, altho' in a more circumſcribed degree than men are. To this it is anſwered, that thought in men is reaſon, and proceeds from an immortal ſpirit joined to matter; but in brutes it was inſtinct, proceeding from a modification of matter, which produces a natural impulſe which they can not avoid. This definition ſhews rather a difference than a diſtinction; for many animals, particularly dogs and horſes, are taught to do theſe things, which a natural impulſe could not compel them to. This however was the general conception and belief of a future ſtate, before the coming of our ſaviour. It was the moſt probable ſuppoſition, which human reaſon, unaſſiſted by revelation, could entertain. There is nothing inconſiſtent in it; it ſuppoſes but one future judgment, and but one ſpirit the object of it. But when our Saviour came, and in a more explicit manner declared the will of God to men; he alſo declared the manner and time of this future judgment; he agreed with the common received opinion, that after death, all men ſhould be brought to judgment; but he told

told them alſo, that this future judgment would be a general one, which ſhould be paſſed on mankind at the end of time, when the preſent world ſhould be deſtroyed; and that, at that time, the divine power would raiſe all men from death, by having their earthly corrupted bodies changed into ſpiritual and immortal ones, ſuch as angels are; that at that time, the ſea and the grave ſhould deliver up their dead, and the juſt and unjuſt be brought to judgment; when each perſon ſhould be rewarded or puniſhed ſuitable to their merits; that in his father's houſe there were many manſions; or, that as there were different degrees of merit, ſo there were alſo different degrees of happineſs in heaven; and from parity of reaſon, there muſt alſo be different degrees of puniſhment in hell.

To beget in the mind of man a perſuaſion, or even an idea, of dead corrupted matter being convertible into a living ſpirit, is beyond our conception; it ſtretches beyond theſe *data* with which the human mind is endowed; but to reconcile it to our belief, he tells us, that we do not know, nor can we judge of, how far the power of God extends, by which this change is to be wrought: and nothing leſs than a divine teſtimony could reconcile it to us. But Jeſus Chriſt to ſhow the poſſibility, and to evince the truth of what he declared, became himſelf the evidence to prove it: for his reſurrection from death was by this change or converſion of his mortal or earthly body into an immortal and ſpiritual one. One of the diſtinguiſhing marks, by which we were to know the Meſſiah promiſed, was, that God would not allow his holy one to ſee (or ſuffer) corruption: or, that the Meſſiah ſhould riſe from the ſtate of death, before corruption ſhould overtake or befall his body; and agreeable to this prophetick deſ-

cription, the reſurrection of Jeſus was before his body could ſuffer corruption.

The converſion of matter into ſpirit is as much reconcileable to reaſon as the converſion of a ſpirit into a material ſubſtance; yet we have ſeveral inſtances of this laſt in the Old Teſtament. When Abraham and Lot entertained the angels before the deſtruction of Sodom, they entertained them as men, Abraham ſet meat before them and they ate it; but both Abraham and Lot afterwards converſed with them as angels or divine beings. When Jacob wreſtled with the angel, and obliged him to bleſs him, he did it as with a man; yet he knew the perſon he wreſtled with to be a divine being, for he ſays, *Now I have ſeen God face to face, and yet my life is preſerved.* Now if we allow that ſpiritual beings may be ſo changed, as to be ſeen, heard, felt, and to eat as men, and afterwards to reſume their ſpiritual nature at pleaſure, ſo as to be no longer the object of our ſenſes; there can be no greater reaſon given againſt the converſion of our material bodies into ſpiritual ones at the reſurrection. Thus Jeſus Chriſt, after his reſurrection, was endowed with the ſame powers, as the Angels in the Old Teſtament were; he was ſeen by, he talked with, and was felt by his Diſciples, and as the Angels did with Abraham, he eat with them, and then diſappeared.

Sleep is that ſtate, by which death is repreſented in the ſcriptures. While we ſleep ſound, or without dreaming, (as is often the caſe with young healthy people) we are inſenſible of time; when we are awake, it ſeems only a moment; and as death is called falling a-ſleep, ſo the reſurrection may be called awaking from it, where ten thouſand years will ſeem but as a moment. It is ſaid of David, *that after he had ſerved his generation he fell aſleep,*

and

and ſaw corruption, but (continueth the apoſtle) *He, whom God hath raiſed, ſaw no corruption. But now Chriſt is riſen from the dead, and is become the firſt fruits of them that ſlept; for ſince by man came death, by man alſo came the reſurrection from death, but every man in his proper order, Chriſt firſt and afterwards, they that are Chriſt's at his coming;* but the ſecond coming of Chriſt is to be at the day of univerſal judgment, at the end of the world. This then is to be the time when the juſt ſhall riſe; and if Chriſt is the firſt who roſe from the dead, and the only one whoſe body did not ſuffer corruption, then it muſt follow, that all they who had died before his reſurrection, muſt have been ſtill in that ſtate of ſleep or death, and their bodies have been corrupted. And from equal reaſon, all who have died ſince him, muſt remain in that ſame ſtate, till his ſecond coming at the day of judgment; but we are expreſsly told, that this general and univerſal judgment is to be at the end of time, when death will be no more, *when the grave and the ſea ſhall deliver up their dead; when, in an inſtant, on the ſounding of the trumpet, all the dead ſhall riſe; and from material and corrupted bodies, be changed into immaterial and incorruptible ſpirits. For at the reſurrection of the dead, what was ſown in corruption will be raiſed in incorruption, what was ſown a natural body, will be raiſed a ſpiritual one: for fleſh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.*

Thus by the Chriſtian Doctrine we are given to underſtand.

1ſt, That the reſurrection from the dead is to be a general one.

2d, That it will not be till the end of time or ſecond coming of Chriſt.

3d, That

3d, That the manner of it, will be by a change or converſion of our dead corrupted bodies into living incorruptible ſpirits.

4th, That then, and not till then, judgment ſhall be paſſed upon us; when to each perſon will be aſſigned ſuch rewards or puniſhments, as his behaviour while on earth ſhall have merited.

The proof of any thing aſſerted muſt depend either on reaſon or evidence. Reaſon is the agreement between things formerly obſerved in the courſe of nature, and thoſe which, from ſimilitude, we expect may happen in time to come. Reaſon therefore depends on obſervation of things paſt; but evidence is the teſtimony of our ſenſes, relative to things preſent; it has no reliance on, nor regard to reaſon or former obſervation; it is the atteſtation of our ſenſes, which obliges us to believe the fact, altho' we cannot conceive the manner. This is the caſe in miracles. When we ſee things done contrary to that ſyſtem, which we obſerve in the common courſe of nature, we conclude them to be miracles, or that they are brought about by a ſupernatural power, by a power which commands, controuls or changes the courſe of nature.

When the Diſciples of Chriſt came to the Sepulchre, and could not find the body, the thought which naturally would, and immediately did occur to them was, that it had been carried away from the place where they had put it. But they are told by an attending Angel, that its abſence from the Sepulchre, where they had put it, was not owing to its removal, as they imagined, but to his reſurrection, to a reſumption of life, by a change being made from his earthly and mortal body into a ſpiritual one; in which ſtate he

ſhould

ſhould ſhew himſelf to them, agreeable to what he had told them before his death. When this was reported to the other Diſciples, as they could not conceive, ſo they would not believe this account of his reſurrection, but were ſurpriſed what ſhould have become of the body. They met together in a private room, with the doors cloſe ſhut on them, to conſider of what had happened. When behold (while thus privately met) Jeſus ſhows himſelf in the midſt of them. Surpriſed and terrified, they imagined this appearance to be his ghoſt. The idea men entertained of a ſpirit or ghoſt, was (it ſeems) the ſame then among them, as it now is among us, viz. that of the ſoul or ſpirit ſeparated from the body, which was capable of being ſeen and heard, but quite uncapable of being felt. This is an idea proceeding merely from prejudice; for an object capable to be ſeen or heard, as neceſſarily implies matter to be the object of what is ſeen and heard, as feeling implies matter to be the object of what is felt. Jeſus therefore, addreſſed himſelf to their prejudices; and to convince them that his appearance was not that of a ghoſt, or ſpirit ſeparated from the body, but his real natural body thus changed into a ſpiritual one, deſires them to come and examine him; for that it was as much in his power, to make himſelf the object of feeling to their touch, as of being ſeen or heard, was to their eyes and ears, which, from their own conception of a Ghoſt, could not have been; and deſires them not to entertain any doubt of his reſurrection, *and to be no longer faithleſs, but believe.* If the reſurrection of Jeſus had been occaſioned by no other change in his body, than by the reanimating it, it would have been ſtill ſubject to the ſame laws as other natural bodies are. He could neither

have come into the room, nor gone out of it, but by the ſame regular and ſucceſſive uninterrupted motion, as other bodies do: but here, while the door was ſhut, he ſuddenly appears in the midſt of them; they ſee him, hear him and feel him; their ſenſes are the evidences of his preſence; and their ſenſes are alſo the evidence, both of the manner of his appearance and diſappearance; neither of which were agreeable to theſe laws to which natural bodies are ſubject; and became a proof, that his body was ſo changed, as rendered it not ſubject to the laws of natural bodies; and in this manner it was, that he always ſhewed himſelf after his reſurrection; his appearing was inſtantaneous, and his diſappearing was ſo alſo. When he joined the two diſciples going to Emaus, while he walked and talked to them, he did not put on that uſual likeneſs of himſelf, by which they could know him; but when he had done inſtructing them, he then put on his former natural appearance by which they had known him, and he then diſappeared. Here we have (in Chriſt) an inſtance and proof of that change, which will be wrought on men by the reſurrection; for St. John tells us, *that tho' it doth not yet appear what we ſhall be, yet this we know, that when he ſhall appear, we ſhall be like him, for we ſhall ſee him as he is.*

By reaſon we can judge only of things natural: but as the power of God is infinitely beyond the conception of human reaſon, we cannot comprehend, or ſet bounds to the extent of it: it is therefore not from our confined ideas, that we are to judge of it. It is much above our reaſon to conceive the growth of vegetables, or generation of animals; we know not the manner, how air and water can be converted into an Oak Tree: but as obſervation has made this familiar to our ſenſes, it is

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fore, with us, no miracle. On the other hand, the converſion of matter into ſpirit is not familiar to our ſenſes, and therefore it is a miracle. Thus Moſes diſtinguiſhes thoſe things which are above our reaſon, from thoſe which are equal to it (Deut. 29. v. 29. *The ſecret things belong unto the Lord our God, but theſe things which are revealed belong to us and to our Children for ever.*

Theſe are the two ſyſtems of a future ſtate and judgment, entertained by mankind, viz. That of a ſeparationof the ſoul from the body on death; and that of a change or converſion of the corrupted matter of a body into a living ſpirit, by the power of God at the end of the world. A man may embrace which of theſe two opinions he chuſes; but it is abſurd to believe in both; for both cannot be true, without ſuppoſing two different and diſtinct times of future judgment, and two different and diſtinct ſouls to be the object of it, viz. that Spirit, which is on death ſeparated from the body, and immediately brought to judgment; and that ſpirit, into which the body is to be converted or changed at the reſurrection, or the general day of judgment, to be held at the end of the world, or ſecond coming of Chriſt. The laſt belief is the chriſtian faith, which therefore precludes the former.

From theſe reaſons the author, as a chriſtian, thinks himſelf obliged to believe, that man does not conſiſt of two different and diſtinct principles, the Soul and Body; and of conſequence that there can be no intermediate ſtate betwixt death and the general reſurrection of the dead; and that, what he hath delivered in the foregoing ſheets, is ſo far from being inconſiſtent with the doctrine of Jeſus Chriſt, as handed down to us in the New Teſtament; that he cannot conceive

how that doctrine can be explained, or underſtood, in any other manner, than on a ſuppoſition that there is no ſuch intermediate ſtate between death and the reſurrection at the general judgment- as is generally believed.

AS the author hath entitled this treatiſe, *an Apology for Opinions entertained by Michael Servetus*; the reader may be deſirous to know what were thoſe opinions of Servetus, for which the author apologiſes. Michael Servetus was a Spaniſh phyſician; who, at the time of the great diſſent from the Roman Church in the ſixteenth century, wrote ſeveral treatiſes, wherein he denyed the equalityof the ſecond perſon of the trinity with the firſt; theſe raiſed an univerſal perſecution againſt him as an Heretick; all his books were burned that could be found, ſo that there are very few copies now remaining, and where they ſtill remain, the acceſs to them is very difficult. There had been a controverted diſpute, long carried on between him and that great reformer John Calvin; who was ſo enraged againſt Servetus for obſtinately maintaining ſuch heterodox opinions, that on his paſſing through Geneva, in going to Italy, he had him apprehended, and proſecuted as an Heretic before the magiſtrates of that republic; who condemned him to be burned alive: which ſentence was executed on the 27th of October 1553. The Hereſy, for which this puniſhment was inflicted, will beſt appear by the following ſpeech, which he delivered at the ſtake.

Michael

MICHAEL SERVETUS's SPEECH,

Before he was burned at Geneva, concerning the true knowledge of GOD and his SON.

'THEY, who aſſert three ſubſtantial perſons 'or hypoſtaſes in the Godhead, do inſi-'nuate to us, that there are three Gods by nature 'equal; for they tell us, there are three ſubſtan-'tial, diſtinct and different things, and will have 'every one of thoſe things or hypoſtaſes (as they 'call them) to be a God. Thus they do neceſ-'ſarily make three equal and diſtinct Gods: For 'ſince theſe perſons or hypoſtaſes, differing in 'number and fact, are each of 'em predicated of 'GOD, the conſequence is plain, that there are 'as many predicates as ſubjects, and that the 'number of Gods muſt be equal to the number 'of perſons. And altho' in words they tell us 'there is only one God; yet in effect and reality 'they preſent three to our underſtanding: For 'every man of the leaſt ſkill or ingenuity muſt 'ſee, that three are propoſed to him, as the objects 'of his adoration. No man yet could ever ex-'plain or inform us how he underſtood that theſe 'three, of which each is a God, were only one 'God. There remains therefore, both on the 'mind and underſtanding, this inſuperable per-'plexity and inexplicable confuſion, that three 'are one, and one is three. For altho' the 'whole underſtanding intends, and is directed to 'one God, and propoſeth to itſelf one God to be

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'worſhipped in ſpirit, and is thoroughly perſuaded
'of the unity: yet immediately three diſtinct ob-
'jects preſent themſelves, and frequently appear
'to the mind, each of which it knows to be a
'God; and thus ſeeing that three equal and
'diſtinct Gods are repreſented to its view, it
'faints, being confounded between one and three;
'this is the iſſue of the *Greek Trias* or triplicity.
'But if on the other hand, we are willing to try
'the whole matter by the word of the holy
'ſcripture, as by a touchſtone; and to find out
'the true knowledge of GOD, according to the
'word of GOD himſelf, all confuſion and per-
'plexity will immediately vaniſh; and our under-
'ſtanding will not be obliged to admit any thing
'in itſelf contradictory.

'We muſt therefore remark, firſt, that God is
'the common name of all power, dominion and
'ſuperiority, and properly belongs to him who
'is over all, who is the prince of all, the King
'of kings, and Lord of lords, of whom all are,
'and on whom they depend, who alone is the
'Father and Creator of all things. But if taken
'in a more limited ſenſe, it may alſo agree with
'the creatures, as whoſoever has a power and
'ſuperiority from GOD over another, he may be
'ſtiled his GOD. As *Moſes*, Exod. vii. 1. is called,
'*the* God *of Pharoah*. And *Cyrus*, *Eſa.* xlv. 3.
'*the* God *of Iſrael*: And if only for example's
'ſake, I may be permitted to join profane things
'to ſacred: *Auguſtus Cæſar* was *Virgil*'s, and *Len-
'tulus*, *Cicero*'s God, becauſe he was the author
'of his reſtitution. After this manner the ſcrip-
'ture calls Gods, whomſoever the ſupreme and
'eternal GOD hath adorned and exalted above
'others, by any particular favour, virtue or privi-
'lege. Hence the *Pſalmiſt*, Pſ. lxxxii. 6. *I have*

ſaid

'*ſaid ye are gods, and all of you are children of*
'*the moſt high*; and *Exod.* xxii. 28. Theſe are
'not Gods by nature, but by the grace and gift
'of GOD, and therefore they are never called by
'that name of the Deity, which belongs to the
'ſupreme GOD only; for ſuch, amongſt the *He-*
'*brews*, are named Gods and Lords, *Elohim*, and
'*Adonai*; by which the names of the Deity are
'properly diſtinguiſhed; but the proper and
'ſingular name JEHOVAH is never attributed to
'them the Lord, (*here ſomething in the manuſcript,*
'*from which I have taken this account, is wanting*):
'And therefore St. PAUL begins all his epiſtles
'after this manner; *Grace and Peace from* GOD *our*
'*Father, and our Lord* JESUS CHRIST. But to
'make three Gods by nature equal, is the maſter-
'piece of blaſphemy, and a curſed impiety. We
'muſt aſcribe all things to one, *viz.* to him, who
'is the author of all things, and who for his own
'pleaſure created them; for he only by nature is
'of himſelf GOD; all the reſt are not Gods of
'themſelves, they receive and acknowledge their
'meaſure of the Godhead from the one GOD the
'Father: From GOD they are called Gods; for
'the ſupreme GOD is able to ſanctify the creatures,
'and fill them with the divinity. But we can by
'no means eſtabliſh three Gods by nature equal,
'without ſetting up, at the ſame time, three Crea-
'tors or Almighties, and three Fathers: for the
'name of God ſimply belongs to the Father
'only, who is of himſelf GOD, and who created
'all things, and he alone is ſimply and abſolutely
'called GOD. From what has been ſaid, 'tis
'eaſy to ſhew, how our Lord JESUS CHRIST, the
'true SON of GOD, is called God: For from
'GOD the Father he receiveth the proportion of
'his Godhead, and from the true GOD, he is

ſtiled

'ſtiled the true God, the God indeed of all crea-
'tures, but not the Fathers God, to whom he
'hath ſubjected all things. Moreover the Father,
'who only by nature is God himſelf, is neverthe-
'leſs the Lord and God of the Son; which the
'Son declared, Joh. xiv. 28. *I go unto my Father,*
'*for my Father is greater than I.* Joh. xx. 17.
'*I aſcend unto my father and your father, and to*
'*my God and your God.* Matth. xxvii. 46. *My*
'*God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* Rev.
'iii. 12. *I will write upon him the name of my*
'*God, and the mame of the city of my God.* Nei-
'ther doth their interpretation, who ſay, that the
'Son ſpoke theſe things as a man, not as God,
'avail any thing; to which we reply, that the
'manner of the Deity, which the Son poſſeſſeth,
'agrees with him as a man; for the ſon is a man
'made God, or filled with the divinity, therefore
'the ſuperiority of the Father is not taken away by
'the ſon; for although the Son is conſtituted by
'the Father, our Lord, God and Head; yet the
'the Father is ſtill the Lord and God, and head of
'the Son; 1 *Cor.* xi. 3. *and the Son is ſubject to*
'*the Father*; 1 *Cor.* xv. 28. *and he is the mana-*
'*ger and adminiſtrator of his Father's houſe;*
'*Heb.* ii. 8. and therefore the Son, as our God,
'and our head, hath admitted the Deity and ſupe-
'riority of the Father over himſelf. Hence the
'prophet eloquently explaining this twofold man-
'ner of the Godhead of the Father and Son, ſaid
'to the Son, *Pſal.* xlv. 2, 6, 7. *Thou art fairer*
'*than the children of men: Grace is poured into*
'*thy lips;* therefore, *thy throne, O God, is for ever*
'*and ever. The ſceptre of thy kingdom is a right*
'*ſceptre. Thou loveſt righteouſneſs, and hateſt wick-*
'*edneſs: therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed*
'*thee with the oil of gladneſs above thy fellows.*

'See how David in ſpirit calls the ſon God, and 'the father God of the ſon; for thy throne, O 'God, and hath anointed thee O God, are of 'the vocative caſe, and reſpect the ſon; but thy 'God, which follows, is ſpoken of God the 'father, who did anoint and ſanctify the ſon. 'Likewiſe wiſdom, which repreſents the ſon of 'God, cries out after this manner, Eccleſ. xxiv. '12. *I took root in an honourable people, even in 'the portion of the Lord's inheritance.* Hence then 'it is manifeſt to every one that makes the 'ſcripture his rule, that the ſon is God from the 'father; and that, as God of all, conſtituted by 'the father, he acknowledgeth the divinity and 'ſuperiority of the father over himſelf; tho' this 'diſtinction of divine names is not found among 'the Greeks and Latins, and all are called by 'one common name God, yet by nature there 'is, of himſelf, but one eternal, moſt excellent, 'ſupreme, immortal, inviſible, incomprehenſible 'God, dwelling in inacceſſible light, who created 'and governs all things, from whom all things 'are, and on whom all things depend. This is 'the God of Gods, king of kings, and lord of 'lords, Jehovah, the father, who alone, in the 'holy ſcripture, is ſimply and abſolutely ſtiled 'God and father. He is indeed the univerſal fa-'ther of all things; but, in a proper and more 'limited ſenſe, the father of our Lord Jeſus 'Chriſt, as St. Paul moſt elegantly explains it; '1 Cor. viii. 5, 6. *For though there be that are 'called Gods, whether in heaven or in earth (as 'there be Gods many) but to us there is but one God,* 'The FATHER, *of whom are all things, and we in 'him; and one Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by whom are 'all things, and we by him.* Hence it is evident, 'that tho' creatures are adorn'd with the name of

' the deity; yet 'tis by the favour and conceſſion
' of the one ſupreme God, who is God of Gods,
' the *chief and father of all, who is above all, and*
' *through all, and in you all*, Eph. iv. 6. to whom
' all the reſt, as to the only ſupreme God of him-
' ſelf by nature, relate, and are ſubjected, and
' whom they obey; and this plurality of ſubor-
' dinate Gods bringeth no confuſion, neither is it
' repugnant to the unity of the divine nature, ſince
' every creature praiſeth God, whom alone they
' regard and pant after, as the moſt high and ſu-
' preme God, him only they worſhip and adore;
' this is evident both in the old and new teſta-
' ment, that beſides him, there is no other God,
' Deut. vi. 4. *Hear, O Iſrael, the lord our God*
' *is one lord*; and Deut. x. 17. *The lord your God*
' *is God of Gods, and lord of lords; a great God,*
' *and mighty and terrible, which regardeth not*
' *perſons, nor taketh reward.* And Pſal. l. 1. *The*
' *mighty God had ſpoken;* and St. Paul, Gal. iv.
' 8. *Howbeit then when ye knew not God, ye did*
' *ſervice unto them, which by nature are no Gods;*
' v. 9. *But now after that ye have known God,*
' *how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly ele-*
' *ments.* 1 Tim. vi. 15, 16. *Which in times he*
' *ſhall ſhew, who is the bleſſed and only potentate,*
' *the king of kings, and lord of lords; who only*
' *hath immortality, dwelling in the light, which no*
' *man can approach unto, whom no man hath ſeen,*
' *nor can ſee.* 1 Theſſ. i. 9, 10. *To ſerve the*
' *living and true God, and to wait for his ſon from*
' *heaven, whom he raiſed from the dead, even*
' *Jeſus.* 1 Tim. i. 17. *Unto the king eternal,*
' *immortal, inviſible, the only wiſe God, be honour*
' *and glory, for ever and ever, amen.* 1 Tim- ii.
' 5. *There is one God, and one mediator between*
' *God and men, the man Chriſt Jeſus.* v. 6. *who*

' *gave*

'*gave himself a ranſom for all.* 1 Tim. vi. 13. '*I give thee charge in the ſight of* God, *who* 'quickeneth all things, *and before* Chriſt Jeſus, '*who before Pontius Pilate, witneſſed a good con-* 'feſſion. Tit. ii. 11, 12, 13, 14. *For the grace* 'of God, *that bringeth ſalvation, hath appear-* 'ed to all men, *teaching us that denying ungod-* 'lineſs and wordly luſts, *we ſhould live ſoberly,* 'righteouſly and godly in this preſent world; *look-* 'ing for that bleſſed hope, and the glorious appear- 'ing of the great God, *and our Saviour* Jeſus 'Chriſt, *who gave himſelf for us, that he might* 'redeem us from all iniquity, &c.

'Thus the ſcripture doth always diſtinguiſh 'between *God*, and the Son of *God*; and if you 'examine it with attention, you will find that the 'ſacred writings do conſtantly, three or four 'places only excepted, in the moſt ſimple and 'abſolute manner, call the Father *God*, and the 'Son his *Chriſt Jeſus*; but the divinity of the 'Son is widely different from that of other gods; 'for which reaſon, *God* the Father deified and 'ſanctified others by meaſure, as adopted ſons; 'and thus *Moſes* and *Cyrus* were the particular 'gods of *Pharoah* and *Iſrael*. But *God* ſancti- 'fied *Chriſt* the bleſſed, as his proper Son, and 'poured out his Holy Spirit upon him without 'meaſure, and filled him with the whole divi- 'nity, of whoſe fulneſs we all receive. Neither 'doth this in the leaſt contradict the prophecies, 'that the Son ſhould be equal with the Father in 'Godhead, Power and Glory; becauſe all the 'Deity, Glory and Equality of the Son is from '*God* the Father; as is acknowledged by the 'Son, as the gift of the Father, when he de- 'clareth, Matth. xxvii. 18. *All power is given* 'unto me in heaven and in earth. Likewiſe *Peter*,

Act.

‘ Act. ii. 36. *That* God *hath made the ſame* Jeſus, ‘ *whom ye have crucified, both* Lord *and* Chriſt. ‘ And *Paul*, *Phil.* ii. 9, 10. *Wherefore* God *alſo hath* ‘ *highly exalted him, and given him a name which* ‘ *is above every name. That at the name of* Jeſus ‘ *every knee ſhould bow, of things in heaven, and* ‘ *things in earth, and things under the earth.* ‘ Heb. i. 6. *And let all the angels of* God *wor-* ‘ *ſhip him.* Eph. i. 20, 21, 22, 23. *He raiſed* ‘ *him from the dead, and ſet him at his own right* ‘ *hand, in the heavenly places, far above all prin-* ‘ *cipality, and power, and might, and dominion,* ‘ *amd every name that is named, not only in this* ‘ *world, but alſo in that which is to come; and* ‘ *hath put all things under his feet, and gave him* ‘ *to be the head over all things to the church, which* ‘ *is his body, the fulneſs of him, that filleth all in* ‘ *all.* Heb. i. 5. *For unto which of the angels ſaid* ‘ *he at any time, thou art my Son, this day have I* ‘ *begotten thee?* v. 8. *Thy throne O* God *is for ever* ‘ *and ever; a ſceptre of righteouſneſs is the ſceptre* ‘ *of thy kingdom.* v. 13. *Sit on my right hand, un-* ‘ *til I make thine enemies thy footſtool.* And *John*, ‘ Rev. v. 12. *Worthy is the Lamb that was ſlain,* ‘ *to receive power, and riches, and wiſdom, and* ‘ *ſtrength, and honour, and glory, and bleſſing.* ‘ And therefore St. *Paul* declareth, that this ‘ Godhead of the Son, and his equality with the ‘ moſt high *God*, the Father, is not to be under- ‘ ſtood in reſpect of the Father himſelf, but in ‘ reſpect of the creatures; 1 Cor. xv. 27. *For* ‘ *he hath put all things under his feet. But when* ‘ *he ſaith all things are put under him, it is ma-* ‘ *niſeſted, that he is excepted, which did put all* ‘ *all things under him.* Ver. 28. *And when all* ‘ *things ſhall be ſubdued unto him, then ſhall the* ‘ *Son alſo himſelf be ſubject unto him, that put all*

‘ *things*

‘ *things under him, that* God *may be all in all.*
‘ For although the Son acknowledgeth that he,
‘ by the gift of his Father, was made equal to
‘ the Father, in might, glory and power, yet he
‘ would not abuſe that gift of equality, and turn
‘ it to tyranny and rapine, according to *St. Paul,*
‘ *Phil.* ii. 8. *He humbled himſelf, and became obedi-*
‘ *ent unto death, even the death of the croſs.* *Ver.* 9.
‘ *Wherefore* God *alſo hath exalted him, and ſubject-*
‘ *ed to him all things in Heaven, and in Earth, and*
‘ *under the Earth.* The Almighty Father conſti-
‘ tuted a God and Lord to be worſhipped by all
‘ creatures: In ſhort, He conferr'd on his moſt
‘ beloved Son, as much Might, Power, Grace,
‘ Bleſſing, Glory and Godhead, as poſſible; and
‘ he beſtowed as much Honour on the Son, both
‘ in his Equality, and in his Throne, as the Son
‘ could poſſibly deſire; *Acts.* iv. 12. *For there is*
‘ *none other name under Heaven given among men,*
‘ *whereby we muſt be ſaved,* but in the name of
‘ the Son of *God,* our *Lord Jeſus Chriſt,* who is in
‘ the true *Lord,* and our *God,* as *Thomas*; *Joh.* xx
‘ 28. *and Paul and John have moſt truly confeſt.*
‘ To whom therefore, with *God* the *Father,* the
‘ moſt high and moſt merciful *God,* be Praiſe,
‘ Honour, and Glory, to everlaſting ages. *Amen.*

P. B. M. D.

FINIS.

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